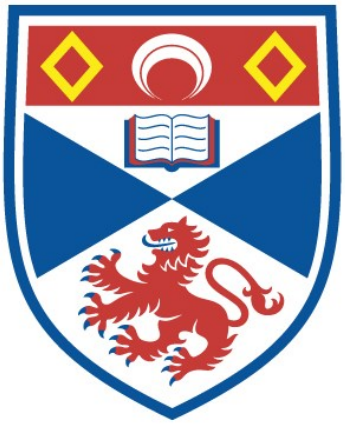
A CRITICAL TRANSLATION OF CHARLES COLLÉ'S 'LE GALANT ESCROC'

Frances Vasey

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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A Critical Translation of Charles Collé's *Le Galant escroc*.

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of St. Andrews

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Abstract

Charles Collé (1709-1783) enjoyed the reputation amongst his contemporaries of an accomplished writer of popular songs and of *comédies de société*. Although three of his plays were performed at the Comédie-française during his lifetime, the vast majority of his work was written with a view to performance at the private theatres in Paris, notably that of his main benefactor, the duc d'Orléans. This thesis looks at one of the plays written for the duc's circle of friends, namely *Le Galant escroc* (1753), the intention being to produce a translation into English for performance purposes.

As a preliminary to translation, the play is analysed in the light of four aspects of eighteenth-century society and literature: a discussion of Collé's life and career; relevant aspects of the theatre and of literary trends in the eighteenth century, with special reference to the private theatres of Paris; the social background of the characters portrayed in *Le Galant escroc*, with particular reference to the *financiers* and their relationship to the members of the nobility; and characteristic features of eighteenth-century French. The translation strategy is based both on the above considerations and on consideration of relevant translation theories.

The translation retains the eighteenth-century setting, with some elements of archaism in the language and markers to remind the audience that the action is taking place in France. Emphasis is placed on theatricality and playability, but the author's intentions, in as far as they are deducible, are respected.

Acknowledgements

Many people have helped and encouraged me in the preparation of this thesis; among those to whom I am indebted, I would like to express my thanks to the following in particular: Ian Higgins, who can only be described as the ideal supervisor; the University of St Andrews, the Voltaire Foundation and the British Federation of Women Graduates for their generous financial support; Brian McAndie and Dr. Joe Carson for their help with printing; the staff at the St Andrews University library and at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris for all their patience and professionalism.

I would also like to express my thanks to my mother, whose friendship and love means so much to me. Finally, my thanks to Richard: my husband, who supports me in everything.

Abbreviations Used in the Thesis

La Partie...	— La Partie de chasse de Henri IV (Collé)
SL	— Source Language
TL	— Target Language
ST	— Source Text
TT	— Target Text

Note to the text: quotations are given using the author/date system.

A copy of the Target Text is included as a detachable insert. This is a direct copy of the Pléiade version of the text, in Truchet, 1974, pp. 657-678.

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Introduction

This thesis springs from a twin interest in translation and in eighteenth-century French theatre. A preliminary reading of the work of Charles Collé (1709-1783) inspired an interest in comedies which were written for performance at private theatres, as opposed to those texts which formed the repertories of the main public theatres of the eighteenth century. In the search for information on Collé, it quickly became clear that references to him by his contemporaries are few and far between, and are mainly confined to his writing of *chansons populaires*, and to those of his plays which were accepted by the Comédie-française: *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV*, *Dupuis et Desronais* and *La Veuve*. These references are favourable,[1] and it would seem fair to assume that Collé was considered an accomplished writer whose work made an impact on those sections of the theatre-going public he wrote for.[2]

There have been references made to Collé's work in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; for example Du Bled (1893), D'Alméras and D'Estrée (1905), Gaiffe (1910) and Augustin (1924).[3] More recent references to Collé tend to be based on quotations from his *Journal* and his *Correspondance inédite*, which are generally regarded as a telling critique of eighteenth-century society and theatre. Jacques Boncompain, for example, uses quotations from the *Journal* and *Correspondance* as a commentary on some of the main events in eighteenth-century society and history of the theatre (Boncompain, 1976, e.g. p. 227, 242-243). There is a wealth of material written by Collé, however, which was not commented upon at great length by his

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[1] See, for example, comments made by Grimm which are included in Chapter 1, p. 7.
[2] A discussion of Collé's changing ambitions in theatre, and the different audiences he was writing for, can be found in Chapter 1, pp. 10-25. For details of the private theatres in Paris and the typical audiences, see Chapter 2, pp. 49-57.
[3] The opinions of these authors, amongst others, form the basis for the background detail on Collé's life and career which is the focus of Chapter 1.

contemporaries, and which has hitherto received little attention.[4] The vast majority of Collé's work consists of short *parades* and comedies, which were aimed at the private theatre audiences of Paris. Much has been written on the mainstream authors of the eighteenth century, but authors such as Collé, writing predominantly for private theatres, have been ignored up to a certain point. In bringing together the various factors necessary for an understanding of Collé's *théâtre de société* and his audiences, I have made a contribution to eighteenth-century theatre studies.

In choosing a play for translation, I decided upon Collé's *théâtre de société* as being the genre which could be adapted most readily to the tastes of a contemporary British audience.[5] This decision was based on several reasons; this is the genre which Collé favoured most, referring in his *Journal* to plays such as *Le Galant escroc*, *La Vérité dans le vin* and *La Tête à Perruque* (see for example *Journal* 1, pp. 387-388). Upon reading Collé's *théâtre de société*, I found *Le Galant escroc* to be one of the most favourable options: although light-hearted on the surface, this play reveals much about the social structure and the *mœurs* of this particular society. Although set in the eighteenth century, the main plot centres on a universal theme, that of adultery. *Le Galant escroc* shows Collé at his most witty; the action is fast-moving, but the characters are not superficial as a consequence.

My conviction in choosing *Le Galant escroc* was further strengthened by my being able to attend a performance of the play in November 1995 at the *Théâtre du Tourtour* in Paris. The theatre is small (an audience of about 40 attended), and this recreated in some way the intimate atmosphere of a private theatre performance. Although there was much made of the sexual innuendo in the source text, this performance was extremely enjoyable, and

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[4] The one notable exception is the critical edition of *La Veuve*, edited by Michèle Weil (1991). The comments made by Weil in her *Présentation* (Weil, 1991, pp. 7-19) are a useful means of comparison to, for example, the character of Sophie in *Le Galant escroc* (see Chapter 1, pp. 18-19).

[5] A discussion of the various genres practised by Collé can be found in Chapter 1, pp. 10-21.

was proof that Collé's text is still considered humorous by a contemporary French audience.[6] My aim is to produce an English translation which will prove equally successful in performance.

By its very nature, translation itself is a way of analysing a text. My target text could be described as a critical translation, in that it results from analysing, and making decisions based on research into the source author's writing, and the literary and historical background against which the play is set. Although there are many different ways of translating the text, my interest lies in producing a translation which is concerned with illustrating Collé's presumed intentions in writing the play. This will enable my target audience to form some impression of what it was to attend a performance of the play in the 1750s. Accordingly, each of the first five chapters of the thesis corresponds to one of the factors concerning the choice of strategy for translating *Le galant escroc*. Since each of these factors could on its own legitimately form the subject of a thesis, it has been necessary to limit discussion of each to those aspects that illuminate *Le Galant escroc*.

The first chapter examines Collé's biographical details and the development of his literary career. Not only does this help to build up an idea of his character, it also enables me to situate the position of *Le Galant escroc* within his changing ambitions in theatre and his tackling of different genres.

The second chapter is a discussion of eighteenth-century theatre, including the royal theatres, the minor public theatres and the private theatres of Paris. This discussion is limited to those aspects of theatre which are relevant to an understanding of Collé's work, and in particular *Le Galant escroc*. I have not, for example, included the Opéra in the discussion, but do discuss the Comédie-française, Comédie-italienne and the Boulevard and *forain* theatres, as they illuminate some aspects of Collé's work. The

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[6] I shall discuss this production of *Le Galant escroc* further in the Points of Detail following the translation.

discussion concentrates mainly on the private theatres, and in particular those of the duc d'Orléans and the comte de Clermont, as they were Collé's main employers and benefactors. This chapter is, therefore, specifically intended to act as a guide to the different strands of theatre in the eighteenth century with particular reference to Collé.

Chapter 3 is an assessment of the social status of the characters in the play, as it would have been perceived by Collé's target audience. In this assessment, I have concentrated mainly on the *financiers*, or tax farmers, as this is the social group most likely to be unfamiliar to a modern English-speaking audience. Much has been written about the despotic system of tax collecting, and the changing social status of the king's representatives who enforced the system. As an understanding of the *financier*'s role in this society is essential to illuminating the various comments made about the *financiers* in the play, I go into a certain amount of detail concerning the system of *fermes* and the social status of the *fermiers*. Any social tension which exists in the play is between the impoverished nobility and the rich *fermiers*, hence my focus on the possible rivalry between Gasparin and the comte and chevalier in particular. Like eighteenth-century theatre, the complexities of the social strata in this society are a research topic in themselves; I have confined my attention in this area to matters which are directly concerned with the portrayal of Gasparin and the noble characters in the play.

Chapter 4 deals with those features of the language of *Le Galant escroc* which are characteristic of eighteenth-century French. Once again, this chapter is not an overview of eighteenth-century French in general, it is intended as as examination of the language of the play. There are two main objectives in discussing the language: first, to assess whether it deviates significantly from modern-day French, and second, to determine whether there are any elements of the language which may have struck Collé's audience as being particularly marked – perhaps stylized, or archaic. As my

intention is to retain a hint of the 'saveur' of eighteenth-century France in translating the play, it is important to isolate those features of the language which are typical, and atypical, of eighteenth-century texts.

Chapter 5 is a discussion of how far *Le Galant escroc* belongs to a given genre or genres, with reference to other eighteenth-century authors. In order to isolate the specificity of Collé's play, I compare it with typical plays by playwrights who between them represent the major strands of comedy and *drame* in eighteenth-century France.

My strategy for a translation of the play is outlined in Chapter 6. This strategy is based on 3 factors. The first is a critical analysis of *Le Galant escroc.* Since an aim of the translation is to enable the target audience to gain an impression of the play as performed in the 1750s, this analysis is not conducted *in vacuo,* but is necessarily conditioned by the second factor upon which my translation strategy is based, the findings of the first five chapters. Among these findings necessarily figure Collé's presumed intentions: part of the source audience's experience which I am trying to enable the target audience to imagine is their pre-performance expectations. The third factor in my strategy is the decisions made based on a survey of translation theory. The number of translation theorists I have referred to, however, is limited to those which are most useful as a means of pinpointing my approach to translating the play; as this thesis is not concerned with translation theory alone, this restriction was necessary in order to be able to make room for discussion of the social, cultural and linguistic factors essential to an understanding of *Le Galant escroc.*

The text of the translation will be end-noted, consisting of Points of Detail designed to explain particular choices of translation. For ease of reference, copies of the Source Text and the Points of Detail will be appended in fascicule form. The source text is a copy of the Pléiade edition of the play, *Théâtre du dix-huitième siècle* (Truchet, 1974, pp. 657-678). In this edition, small

changes have been made to the original edition of Collé's play, mainly concerning orthography and punctuation. As these changes do not affect the translation as such, the modernized version is the better option, in the sense that the reader's attention is not captured, for example, by unusual spelling of verb endings.

1

Charles Collé: His Life and Career

Charles Collé was born in 1709, the son of a Paris magistrate. He is best known today for his *Journal et mémoires* (3 volumes), and his *Correspondance inédite*, which were reprinted in 1967. These texts do not only provide biographical information: they are also a personal critique of the literature and social events of the period. The *Journal* is full of little anecdotes and events, and one gets the impression throughout of Collé's slightly cynical view of others as he laughs at life's idiosyncrasies. Collé enjoyed the reputation of being a good-humoured, honest man; this is emphasized by Grimm in his *Correspondance*:[1]

> M. Collé a toujours eu de la réputation à Paris. Un grand fonds de gaîté et de bonne humeur, un ton aussi excellent que fin et original, l'ont toujours fait rechercher par la bonne compagnie; l'honnêteté de ses mœurs et de son caractère lui a fait des amis solides. Elle l'a aussi préservé de deux écueils également dangereux et difficiles à éviter avec cette tournure d'esprit: le premier, de devenir caustique en se livrant entièrement à la satire; l'autre de jouer dans les sociétés le rôle de plaisant et de bouffon, rôle bien avilissant pour un homme d'honneur.
>
> Grimm, 1763, pp. 287-288.

However, Bonhomme's commentary on the *Journal* shows a different viewpoint; he claims that the posthumous publication of Collé's diaries made some change their original opinion of him, in

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[1]Grimm provides the most comprehensive sketch of Collé's character and work; most references by contemporaries are in connection with his *chansons*, *La partie de chasse de Henri IV* and *Dupuis et Desronais*. Collé seems to have been embarrassed about some of the favourable criticisms of *La Partie...* and *Dupuis et Desronais*. In his *Épanchement de l'Amour-propre*, published at the start of the second edition of his *Théâtre de société* (1777, Gueffier), Collé comments on the *Renommée littéraire*, the *Mercure de France* and *L'Année littéraire*: Collé accepts their flattery, but claims his real reward is seeing his plays performed successfully on stage (*Correspondance Inédite*, pp. 289-298).

that someone who enjoyed the reputation of being good-humoured could appear so bitter:

> On se demandait comment un esprit assez doux, aussi placide que celui de Collé avait pu tourner ainsi subitement à l'*aigre*; comment ce poëte aimable et de belle humeur, tout couronné de pampres et de roses comme un vrai païen qu'il était, avait troqué sa *marotte* et ses *grelots* (style de l'époque) contre la lourde férule du pédagogue.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, p. 2.

It is very true that Collé does tend to criticize many things in his diary; the list includes such diverse subjects as musicians, authors, plays, *philosophes*, theatre audiences, Jesuits and *dévots*. The diary is full of contradictions: his amendments made in 1768 and commented upon by Bonhomme, show that Collé recognized that his own judgement may sometimes have been too hasty. This admission is included at the very beginning of his diaries:

> J'ai substitué à la première feuille de ce Journal celle que j'écris aujourd'hui en septembre 1768, vingt ans après l'avoir entrepris, pour déclarer ici les motifs qui m'ont fait faire ces barbouillages. Les voici: en 1745 j'eus une sciatique cruelle, qui me fit croire que je serois toute ma vie valétudinaire; elle fut si affreuse que, m'ayant plié en deux pendant un an, à peine pouvois-je marcher en 1746. Ce mal, qui demandoit pour sa curation un continuel exercice du corps, me détermina à quitter l'emploi sédentaire que j'avois chez M. de Meulan, mon camarade de collège et mon ami. En effet, en 1746, au mois d'avril, je cessai de travailler à ce qui s'appelle affaires. M. de Meulan exigea de mon amitié que je garderois chez lui l'appartement qu'il m'y avoit donné. J'y consentis, et je n'ai eu qu'à m'en louer.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, p. 1.

For all that, his diaries remain an amusing, and telling source of information as far as Collé's life and career are concerned. There

seems no reason to believe that he would not give an honest opinion of his own work for example, especially considering such admissions as the above. I would tend to agree more with Du Bled's view of Collé's *Journal*:

> [...] On y trouve d'abord un style simple, franc de collier, nourri d'expressions qui font image et exhalent comme un parfum de vieux terroir gaulois, des portraits à l'emporte-pièce, tracés un peu au hasard, à la billebaude, d'après l'inspiration du moment, l'histoire intime des théâtres et des comédiens, une nuée d'anecdotes piquantes.
>
> Du Bled, 1893, p. 148.

The *Correspondance inédite*, also edited by Bonhomme, contains letters addressed to M. de V***, dating from 5 March 1775 to 31 July 1783. Although not related to him, Collé treats the young man concerned as a son, giving him advice as to how to gain promotion in the *monde des finances*. The edition also includes various letters to other acquaintances, some critical comments on his own work, and that of others (e.g. Voltaire's *Zaïre*, pp. 422-432.)

Although the *Journal* and the *Correspondance* are how he is best known today, there is a wealth of material written by Collé which has not been examined in any major detail; (see *Liste chronologique des ouvrages de Collé*, pp. 271-274). There is a distinct progression in his literary career, which ranges from bawdy songs and *vaudevilles* to plays of a more serious nature which were performed at the Comédie-française and Comédie-italienne. My main concern is, of course, with *Le Galant escroc*, written in 1753, but as a means of getting its specific qualities into focus I shall give a brief outline of the major developments in his writing, and the factors which influenced his work. These details have been gathered from several sources: his *Journal et mémoires* and

Correspondance inédite – including information provided by the editor, Honoré Bonhomme – notes from the *Pléiade* edition presented by Jacques Truchet; Du Bled's *La Comédie de société au XVIII^e siècle*; Lintilhac's *La Comédie au XVIII^e siècle* and Grimm's *Correspondance*.

Collé's first job was as a clerk to a notary in Paris called M. Dutertre. He quickly became frustrated with the legal jargon of the treaties on which he had to work. He had no interest in such matters; his real love lay in literature, and in the theatre in particular. This love stemmed from an early age, as explained in his *Préface générale, ou introduction à la lecture de mes manuscrits*:

> Je n'avais pas encore dix ans que mon père, que je perdis à quatorze, me menait assez souvent aux Français; et, pendant plusieurs années, je n'entrais point dans leur salle qu'il ne me prît un frisson de plaisir, tel que celui que je sentis au premier rendez-vous que me donna la première honnête femme que j'eus à vingt ans et dont j'étais éperdûment amoureux.
>
> Collé, *Correspondance inédite*, pp. 360-361.

Rather than concentrating on his duties, he would spend much of his time writing short poems and songs. In 1733 he joined fellow authors Piron, Gallet, Panard and Crébillon fils to form what was known as the *Caveau*. This group of men would meet up to discuss both their own work and the prominent writers of the time. Encouraged by these friends, Collé continued to work on *chansons*, *vaudevilles* and *amphigouris*.[2] The vast majority of his verses appear in two collections: *Chansons joyeuses, mises au jour par un âne-onyme,*

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[2] Chanson: Pièce de vers que l'on chante sur quelque air, et qui est partagée le plus souvent en stances égales dites couplets; petite composition d'un rhythme populaire et facile (Littré).
Vaudeville: Chanson de circonstance qui court par la ville, et dont l'air est facile à chanter (Littré).
Amphigouri (1738): Ecrit ou discours burlesque rempli de galimatias (Littré).

onnissime and *Chansons qui n'ont pu être imprimées et que mon censeur n'a point du me passer*. These songs are of a bawdy nature, described quite aptly by Thierry Augustin in the following terms:

> C'est de la pornographie toute pure. Collé ne marchande pas sur les mots et ses allusions ont toujours le diable au corps.
>
> Augustin, 1924, p. 176.

These songs were the main occupation of his early career, but he continued to write verses for his patrons and *vaudevilles* for comedies throughout his life. The more serious the comedies, the less licentious his songs could be: the *vaudeville* written for *Le Galant escroc* is suggestive, but has none of the lewdness of some of his earlier work. His talents as a song-writer earned him a substantial sum of money; his *chanson historique* entitled *Sur La Conquête du Port-Mahon* was rewarded by a pension of 600 livres from Louis XV. According to Bonhomme, this was a generous reward for such a short piece of work (*Introduction, Correspondance inédite*, p. 17).

Upon leaving his job with M. Dutertre, Collé was employed as a secretary by M. de Meulan, *receveur général des finances*. [3] This was the start of a long and quite close relationship with the Meulan family; it was also a period during which he must have learned a lot about the world of finance, as represented by the character M. Gasparin in *Le Galant escroc*. Collé remained close to the Meulan family all his life, even though he left his job with M. de Meulan in 1746. The following description by Meulan's daughter reveals a certain amount of affection for him, as he practically became one of the family:

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[3] This was the official responsible for the receipt of taxes, under the system of *fermes*, a series of collectivities in which the tax collectors, or *fermiers généraux*, would collect money for the State. This was a complicated, and, in many ways, an unfair system (see Chapter 3 for a fuller discussion of it).

> Je le vois encore, dit-elle, ce bon Collé, avec son grand nez et sa petite perruque, sa mine étonnée, son air grave et son impertubable et sérieuse gaîté, se divertissant de tout et ne riant de rien.
>
> in D'Alméras and d'Estrée, 1905, p. 32.

Collé's next appointment was with the duc de Chartres (later duc d'Orléans). He was introduced to the duc by M. de Montauban, who belonged to the duc's social circle. The duc had shown an interest in Collé's *Évêque d'Avranches* (later changed to *La Vérité dans le vin*), and asked if Collé would come to read it to him. Collé sent the message back that he did not think the play worthy of the attention of someone of such high social standing as the duc, but would come to read it to him with the following condition:

> [...] Mais que si M. le duc de Chartres vouloit me donner sa parole de demander pour moi des sous-fermes, pour 50 ou 60,000 livres, alors ce motif d'une ambition raisonnable, convenable à mon état, et qui me sauverait du ridicule de la vanité d'auteur et de cette sotte gloriole, me détermineroit sur-le-champ à avoir l'honneur d'aller lui lire tout ce qu'il voudroit. (N'étois-je pas un monsieur bien bon?) J'avois commencé par dire à M. de Montauban que comme la proposition que je faisois-là, et dont il vouloit bien se charger, avoit peut-être en soi quelque chose de ridicule, ou que du moins l'on pourroit facilement l'y tourner, je lui demandois le secret, et le priois de l'exiger de M. de Chartres.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, p. 17.

Despite such audacity, the duc agreed to his request – much to the surprise of Collé also. However, he had to wait to gain his reward; it is only in February 1750 that he talks of his *deux sous* in the *sous-fermes*, which will give him an income of some 18 or 20,000 livres. In the meantime he was well rewarded financially for the pieces he

wrote. This financial reward never ceased to amaze Collé, who was surprised by the sustained interest of the duc:

> Juin 1754
>
> Le 2 du courant je lus à M. le duc d'Orléans ma comédie du *Galant escroc*, qui parut lui plaire. Je vois que l'on jouera encore cet hiver; le goût de ce plaisir-là ne lui a pas encore passé; j'en suis surpris dans un prince. Leurs goûts sont très-vifs et très-courts; je n'imaginois pas que cela pût durer une année; je suis bien aise de m'être trompé, cela me conduit au revouvellement du bail.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, p. 424.

In 1763, Collé was appointed as the duc's *lecteur*[4] and his *secrétaire*,[5] which provided him with a steady income of 2,000 L a year.

The duc had several private theatres, the largest one being at Bagnolet, and Collé was the main provider of entertainment for the duc and his wide social circle for the best part of thirty years.[6] Collé was not a struggling artist: compared with others, such as Alexis Piron (see Rex, 1987, p. 51, Boncompain, 1976, p. 244), he led a comfortable existence and had a certain amount of freedom concerning the work he chose to write, albeit within the expectations of the duc d'Orléans. It was with the duc's literary taste in mind that he turned to the genre of *parades*. This type of play was highly popular in the first half of the century in particular, a genre which was a form of entertainment normally associated with the *forains*, or fairground theatres. The *parades* of Collé are centred around stock figures with no psychological depth at all; an extension of the basic slapstick humour in the *Commedia dell'arte* tradition. Visual humour is central to the effectiveness of these

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[4] The function of the *lecteur* was to read aloud for his employer's amusement (Littré).
[5] The *secrétaire* would write letters and deal with all his employer's correspondence (Littré).
[6] Collé had his plays performed at the comte de Clermont's theatre, although the duc d'Orléans seems to have been his main benefactor. For a discussion of the comte de Clermont, see Chapter 2, pp. 54-55.

parades, with physical movement on stage designed to be exaggerated. *Vaudevilles* are an essential element, providing an extra source of entertainment. Collé recognized the fact that the higher ranks of society found the language, the coarse suggestiveness and the farcical humour of these *parades* highly amusing. Examples of his work within this genre are *Léandre grosse* (1744), *La Mère rivale* (1745), and *Le Mariage sans curé* (1746).

At a later point, Collé renounces this genre in the following terms:

> (Janvier 1749)
> La parade qui a été à la mode pendant quelque temps, est un genre opposé au bon goût et à la belle nature. Je ne connois rien de plus méprisable, après toutefois le genre poissard, et j'en parle en personne désintéressée, puisque j'ai fait plusieurs parades, que je méprise tout autant que celles qui ne sont pas de moi. Il faut toujours en revenir vrai, et tôt ou tard on est ramené au bon goût; ce qui fait encore que je regarde mes amphigouris *sicut delicta juventutis*, en exceptant cependant *Cocatrix*,[7] pour qui, même aujourd'hui, je me sens du foible; mais je sens bien que c'est du foible.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, pp. 43-44.

Instead, he turned to comedies in which the characters had more psychological depth, and the plots of which were more detailed. These plays were intended for performances at private theatres, and he first had them published in 1759 under the title of *théâtre de société*. These plays are one step up from the bawdier *parade*; they are described in the following terms by Lintilhac:

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[7] *Cocatrix* (*tragédie amphigourique*) is one of his earliest works, written in 1731. There are no further references in Collé's diary as to why he favoured this play. It is written in one act and in verse, and is set in the palace of Colorax, king of 'Arabie-Petrée'. The plot is superficial and far-fetched; it is an obvious parody of the growing vogue for exoticism in the eighteenth century.

Le genre semble venir en droite ligne du répertoire de Gherardi, mais en passant par les Dancourades. Affinez un peu ceux-ci; diminuez-en le poivre pour en augmenter le sel; ôtez-en le gros mot; rendez-y la galanterie plus cérébrale, en changeant la gaillardise en grivoiserie, et vous avez le genre des comédies du théâtre de société.

Lintilhac, (n.d.), p. 372.

He was encouraged to undertake the writing of such plays by his wife, whom Collé frequently mentions in his *Journal* and *Correspondance* as being a constant source of inspiration and support to him. He admits that it was his wife who made him believe himself capable of a greater sense of delicacy in his writing. She encouraged him first of all to write his *théâtre de société* and his confidence grew from there:

Je jure que jusque-là je ne me jugeois capable que de faire des parades, genre que dès lors je méprisois au fond du cœur, tout en m'égayant à en faire. Quand ma femme m'excitait à tenter de m'élever jusqu'à la comédie, je lui soutenois avec vivacité, et une intime persuasion, que je serois un présomptueux et un sot de m'en croire le talent.

Vaincu par elle, je fis du sujet de *Niçaise* une comédie, que je ne voulois traiter qu'en parade.

La scène tendre et passionnée du *galant Escroc*, que je me croyois hors d'état d'écrire (n'ayant jamais traité que des gaietés), me fit composer l'acte de *la Veuve*, et cet acte me fit oser *Dupuis et Desronais*; et le tout par les encouragements et les sollicitations très-vives de ma femme. Je puis dire, avec la dernière vérité, que sans elle je n'aurois pas connu mes forces, et que sans ses critiques judicieuses fines et son goût délicat, mes ouvrages auroient été pleins de défauts et peut-être grossiers et rebutants; je dois prodigieusement à ses conseils. Je suis peut-être l'unique auteur de comédies qui ait rencontré dans sa femme un conseil aussi sûr, des

lumières aussi délicates, et, si je puis le dire, une espèce d'*instinct* pour la vraie comédie.

Collé, *Observation de L'auteur*, dated 1780. In *Journal*, 1, pp. 387-388.

The three plays which were Collé's personal favourites are *Le Galant escroc*, *La Vérité dans le vin* and *La Tête à perruque*, included in volume two of the *Théâtre choisi de Collé* (1759).[8] This edition also includes a prologue entitled *Les Adieux de la Parade*, which provides some interesting information on the motivations behind the new plays, and on *Le Galant escroc* in particular. In this prologue, *L'Auteur* first talks to *La Parade*, of whom we are given the following details:

Ce rôle doit être joué par un homme, grotesquement habillé en femme.

Théâtre choisi de Collé, vol. 2, p. 2.

This stage direction alone reflects Collé's opinion of the *parade*: a garish, somewhat exaggerated form of entertainment which has become outdated in his opinion:

L'AUTEUR, *d'un air d'humeur.*
[...] Tout ce qui reste à faire
Lorsqu'on commence à déplaire
C'est de ne reparoître plus.
LA PARADE, *en fureur.*
V'la donc, cruel amant! voilà donc tes rebuts?
V'la donc comme en ce jour tu traites la Parade?
V'la donc le cas que tu fais des beaux Arts?...

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[8]These three plays have the same central theme: the cuckolding of a husband, and the danger involved in his finding out. According to Truchet (p. 1461), all of Collé's *théâtre de société* is linked together by the fact that the characters have more psychological depth than his earlier *parades*, and their intended audience is very obvious, that is to say they are plays most suitable for performances in private theatres. This is an important point upon which I shall comment further in Chapter 5.

Adieu, monstre!... Je vais me mettre en embuscade,
Et me prostituer le long des Boulevards!
(*Elle sort, en pleurant.*)
Ibid., p. 5.

L'Auteur then talks to *La Fausse Décence*, rejecting the false appearance of decency in his plays on the ground that they would lose all their spontaneity:

L'AUTEUR, *seul.*
Je ne voudrois que cette femme seule
Pour ennuyer une Cité!
Quand verrai-je bannir de la société
Cette respectable bégueule,
Qui sait du François même éteindre la gaîté?
Ibid., p. 11.

The author's aim, then, with the *théâtre de société*, is to present more plausible situations and characters, but to preserve some of the gaiety of the *parades*. Scene 5 of the prologue provides some useful information about *Le Galant escroc*. *L'Auteur* has a conversation with the author La Fontaine, the outcome of which is that he chooses La Fontaine's *A Femme avare, galant escroc* upon which to base his comedy.[9] La Fontaine gives him the following advice:

LA FONTAINE
Tant mieux!... Mais, mettez beaucoup d'art
A farder les détails, à bien voiler l'ordure!...
Ibid., p. 15.

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[9] Collé's *Le Galant escroc* follows the plot of La Fontaine's conte, in that the wife of Gasparin is duped in the same way. However, the Gulphar of La Fontaine's conte lets everyone know what has happened, unlike the comte of Collé's play. La Fontaine's conte is not the original; it is an adaptation of the first story of the eighth day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The difference in Collé's *Le Galant escroc* is that he has adapted the plot to the expectations of his audience, in terms of the *mœurs* of this particular society. There is also the social dimension to the play, i.e. the tension between the *financiers* and the nobility.

This statement could apply to some extent to all of the plays in Collé's *théâtre de société*. The plot of *Le Galant escroc* is of the type which could be found in a *parade*; however, the way in which the situation is described is quite different from the bawdy tone of the songs and parades, as will become clear in Chapter 5.

In the late 1750s and early 1760s Collé wrote some plays with the deliberate intention of presenting them to the Comédie-française. The most successful of these plays were *La Veuve* (1756); *Dupuis et Desronais*, (1763) and *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV* (1764). Only one performance of *La Veuve* was given by the Comédie-française on 29 December 1770, and it was booed off stage (*Journal* 3, p. 284). Despite this setback, the play achieved considerable success in the private theatres in Paris, notably at that of M. de Magnaville. A recent critical edition of *La Veuve* has been published by Michèle Weil (Editions Espaces, 1991). There are some comparisons to be drawn between *La Veuve* and *Le Galant escroc*; the character of the chevalier in both plays, for example, is in love with a woman who is wealthier than he is. The description of the chevalier in La Veuve could have been given by the character Mme Gasparin of the chevalier in *Le Galant escroc*:

> Capitaine d'une compagnie de cavalerie, il est d'une petite noblesse ruinée, il n'est rien socialement.
>
> Collé, in Weil (ed.), 1991, p. 13.

Weil, however, situates *La Veuve* within the genre of the *drame* (p. 10), conforming to Diderot's theories on the need for realism in theatre. *Le Galant escroc* definitely does not fit into this genre, as I shall suggest in Chapter 5. Weil also illustrates the complexity and originality of the character La Veuve as a determined, sexually uninhibited woman. The character of Sophie in *Le Galant escroc* also

shows a certain amount of determination, in that she is willing to surrender herself to the chevalier because she loves him (Scene 8). The question is whether Sophie could be described in the same terms as Weil describes La Veuve:

> Spirituelle et cultivée, vive et intelligente, sensible et tendre, belle et belle âme, la riche Madame Durval a trop de qualités pour ne pas paraître idéalisée, comme le Chevalier et son oncle d'ailleurs.
>
> Weil, 1991, p. 15.

Again, I do not want to analyse this point any further at this stage; the portrayal of Sophie is an important consideration concerning my overall analysis of the play, and I shall discuss the character further when considering the type of genre to which the play belongs (see Chapter 5, pp. 130-132.)

Dupuis et Desronais is a comedy in irregular verse, performed seventeen times at the Comédie-française in 1763. The number of performances decreased in the years after that (9 performances in 1764, 6 in 1765 etc.). It proved to be one of the most successful plays at the Comédie-française leading up to the Revolution, with 5 performances as late as 1777. This play is in three acts and is written in verse. It concerns the story of Desronais, a young *financier*, who deperately wants to marry Marianne, daughter of Dupuis. Dupuis is suspicious of Desronais – he thinks he has been involved in scandalous love affairs which would harm the possible future marriage between Desronais and his daughter. Desronais is finally revealed to be an honest, and honourable man, and the play ends with the father's agreeing to the marriage. This play could easily be described as belonging to the *genre larmoyant*, despite Collé's supposed aversion to such plays. In the light of this play, *Le Galant escroc* is in comparison much more light-hearted; the hero is the

libertine comte, who may well be on the side of the young lovers, but whose actions to ensure their marriage are morally dubious, to say the least.

La Partie de chasse... is a historical comedy in prose, popularising the legend of Henri IV. Public performances of this play were prohibited by Louis XV during his lifetime, as he feared unfavourable comparisons between himself and the heroic figure of Henri IV. The play did achieve a huge amount of success, however, in the private theatres in Paris and in provincial theatres. When it was finally performed at the Comédie-française in 1774, it had 20 performances that year, and in subsequent years it rivalled *Le Mariage de Figaro* in terms of performance numbers at that time (e.g. in 1778 it had 17 performances). For a further discussion of this play, see Chapter 2, pp. 34-35.

As they were destined for the public theatre, these plays are of a much more serious tone, with *Dupuis et Desronais* in particular tending towards the *genre larmoyant*. There are several reasons why he seems to have opted for such a change in his literary concerns. One concrete reason is simply for financial purposes (cf. *Journal* 2, p. 143). Collé's love for the theatre meant that he spent a lot of money on entrance tickets and the rules stated that if two plays by an author were accepted by the Comédie-française, then that author would gain free admission to theatre performances. Collé reveals himself in this respect to be a very practical man, concerned about the everyday reality of financial hardship. He was also faced with the prospect of no longer enjoying the same privileges in the private theatres of the duc d'Orléans. The duc was greatly influenced by his new mistress, Mme de Montesson, who suggested that there should be more of a sense of decorum in his

theatre. The suggestion of rejecting the *parades* was in keeping with the duc's elevated social position, but it was a source of frustration to Collé who saw his efforts to please the duc becoming increasingly obsolete. Writing plays which could be accepted by the Comédie-française was a way in which he could boost his flagging confidence. A further proof of his need for recognition is the fact that he also published his own *Théâtre de société*, admitting that in so doing, he hoped that he would be remembered as an author of some worth after his death (*Journal* 2, p. 334). He had a certain amount of ambition, and he felt in the last years of his life that he had something to prove, i.e. that he was capable of producing 'serious' work. Other occupations of the later part of his career include the editing of his *Journal* and also a number of rewrites of popular plays, listed on pp. 271-274.

The death of Collé's wife in 1781 was said to have affected him deeply, and he became rather solitary during the last years of his life. In June 1782, Collé sold his country house at Grignon and spent most of his time at Saint-Cloud, which was one of the duc's properties. It was during this time that the conflict betwen authors, booksellers and actors come to a head (see Boncompain, 1976, pp. 85-143). The authors of the eighteenth century were suffering financially and in terms of their career under the existing laws for publishing and for theatre performances. Publishing privileges of any given work was given to one publisher only, as a means of ensuring that the censorship laws were being obeyed. For the authors concerned, this meant that they were dependent on a single publisher, and lack of competition meant that the publisher could more or less hold the author to ransom and practically become the owner of the book. The authors also suffered because of the power

and prestige of the Comédie-française actors. An author's career could be ruined if his play were a failure: he needed the support of the actors to make sure the play was a success. The authors were very often treated with contempt by the actors; the authors were not even permitted free entry into the Comédie-française to see their own play being performed, and if they did get in, they would not get a good view of their play (see Boncompain, 1976, pp. 98-100).The authors were paid very little for their work: their real reward was to have their play performed by the king's actors. The actors also claimed that a play would *tomber dans les règles* after a certain number of shows, i.e. the play would officially belong to the Comédie-française and the author would have no official claims to ownership. The actors had the advantage in that the authors did not present a united front. This changed, however, in 1777 when Beaumarchais founded the *Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques*, which included Saurin, Marmontel and Sedaine amongst its members. It appears that Beaumarchais sent a personal invitation to Collé to join the society and inviting him to the introductory meeting; Collé refused, however, sending his apologies in the following letter:

> A Grignon, près Choisy-le-Roi, ce 10 juillet 1777.
>
> Je n'ai reçu, Monsieur, la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire le 27 juin que le 9 juillet au soir, à ma campagne, où je suis inamoviblement jusqu'à la fin d'octobre. L'adresse mise au Palais-Royal, où je ne demeure pas, et la maladresse des suisses de Mgr le duc d'Orléans l'ont sans doute empêchée de me parvenir plus tôt, quoique je dusse l'avoir le lendemain. Je ne m'appesantis sur ces détails que pour ne point passer pour un impertinent aux yeux de l'auteur du charmant Barbier, dont je me suis déclaré le plus zélé partisan. Je n'en manque pas une représentation.

Quant à l'objet de votre lettre, Monsieur, je vous avouerai, avec ma franchise ordinaire, que si j'avais été à Paris, je n'en aurais pas eu davantage l'honneur de me trouver à votre assemblée de MM. les auteurs dramatiques. Je suis vieux et dégoûté jusqu'à la naussée de cette chère troupe royale. Dieu nous en envoie une autre! Depuis trois ans je ne vois ni comédiens ni comédiennes.

De tous ces gens-là
J'en ai jusque-là.

Je n'en souhaite pas moins, Monsieur, la réussite de votre projet; mais permettez-moi de me borner aux vœux que je fais pour son succès, dont je douterais si vous n'étiez pas à la tête de cette entreprise, qui a toutes les difficultés que vous pouvez désirer; car vous avez prouvé au public, Monsieur, que rien ne vous était impossible! J'ai toujours pensé que vous n'aimiez pas ce qui était aisé. J'en juge par la hardiesse que vous avez eue de faire rire malgré elle au théâtre notre tendre nation, qui ne veut plus que pleurer ou être intéressée vertueusement, parce qu'elle n'a plus de vertus.

J'ay l'honneur d'être très sincèrement, Monsieur, etc.

Collé, in Beaumarchais , 1972, pp. 150-151.

Collé, then, was no revolutionary as far as concerns his standing up for his rights as an author. He had become increasingly more exasperated with the Comédie-française actors and no longer felt he had the energy to fight: he was nearing the age of seventy at this point, and was more concerned with editing his *Journal* than with any other project.[10] It is interesting to note, though, that he was held in esteem by his fellow authors: if he were to be dismissed as nothing more than the writer of *parades* for private theatres, he surely would not have been approached by Beaumarchais to join their cause. At Collé's death on 3 November 1783, Bonhomme

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[10] A letter to Préville, one of the Comédie-française actors, is included in Collé's *Correspondance Inédite*, pp. 322-323; (a reproduction of the original is also provided). Dated 15 July 1778, this letter is further proof of Collé's apparent apathy, as he says of *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV*, '*Je ne serai pas fâché qu'elle tombe dans les règles et qu'elle appartienne à la Comédie.*' He claims he has become old and is no longer '*de ce monde*'.

claims that there were rumours of his having committed suicide, but Bonhomme dismisses this possibility, along with the conclusion drawn by Bachaumont:

> M. Collé, lecteur du duc d'Orléans, et l'un de ses secrétaires ordinaires, dont on avait annoncé, l'année dernière, l'état triste et languissant, vient d'y succomber, *abandonné* presque généralement, à raison de l'humeur détestable dont il était tourmenté, et qu'il faisait rejaillir sur les autres.
>
> *Mémoires secrets*, 3 novembre 1783.

The letters to M. de V.*** in the *Correspondance inédite* prove that Collé is still working on rewrites and on amendments to his *Journal*, and he has an interest in life. His advice to his young friend is that of a man of experience, rather than of desperation.

Despite the public recognition of his *chansons*, and the immense public sympathy and sense of patriotism generated by *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV*, Collé still saw his *théâtre de société* as his best work, and certainly the plays he most enjoyed writing. This point applies to *Le Galant escroc* in particular:

> L'effet théâtral en est prodigieux; elle a été jouée, comme je l'ai dit ailleurs, assez bien à Bagnolet, hormis la scène des amans, qui n'a jamais été bien rendue. Je voudrois voir cette scène entre les mains de Molé[11] et d'une actrice telle qu'étoit Mlle Gaussin [12]dans sa jeunesse. Cette comédie est, de tous mes ouvrages, celui que j'aime le plus et que je crois le meilleur; je n'en excepte ni *Henri IV*,

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[11] François-René Molé, 1734-1802. His career started at the Comédie-française in 1754, when he played the role of Britannicus. He also played Séïde and Nérestan, but without great success, and left the capital to further his career in the provinces. He reappeared at the Comédie-française in 1760, again appearing in tragedies, which, according to the *Annales dramatiques*, were never his strongpoint. In 1762, he enjoyed huge success in the comedy *Heureusement*. From then on, Molé was one of the darlings of the Comédie-française.

[12] Jeanne Catherine Gaussin, 1711-1767. This actress began her career at the Comédie-française in 1731. According to the *Annales dramatiques*, she was best at playing *les rôles d'amour*, but in general she found success with whichever role she chose to undertake. She married Toglaigo, a dancer from the Opéra, in 1758 and gave up her acting career soon after.

ni *Dupuis et Desronais;* et je pense que les connoisseurs doivent être de mon avis.

Collé, *Journal* 3, p. 131.

Collé's *théâtre de société* allows him to find a middle path between respectability and licentiousness. He can base his comedies on the type of characters he meets up with in society, and yet the plots are contrived and amusing. This is one of the main reasons why I have chosen to translate *Le Galant escroc*: I feel that the *théâtre de société* is Collé at his best. He does not have the pressure in writing these plays as those destined for the Comédie-française, nor does he feel the genre is somehow unworthy of his talents, unlike the earlier *parades*.

2

French Theatre and Popular Entertainment in the Eighteenth Century

An assessment of the theatre and other forms of popular entertainment in this century provides essential background details about Collé's work on several levels. For example, it goes some way to evaluating general trends; the likes and dislikes of a society in which the theatre played such an important role. Although *Le Galant escroc* was written with a view to being performed in a private theatre, one cannot dismiss the broader spectrum, as there is so much overlap between the various theatrical institutions and the genres normally associated with them. From marketplace banter to the eloquent tirades of the Comédie-française actors, Collé seems to have been aware of many different elements, and to have incorporated them into his writing.[1]

The immense popularity of the theatre and of acting in the eighteenth century can only be described as a mania. It affected all social classes, not just the educated and rich. Alasseur stresses the social value of theatre-going and sees the increased interest as a change in mentality:

> Le théâtre peu à peu est considéré comme une institution sociale, alors qu'il était auparavant un épisode accidentel.
>
> Alasseur, 1967, p. 7.

One of the reasons for the growth of the number of theatres in France in the first half of the eighteenth century was the impact of the Jesuit order. Martine de Rougemont gives a brief, but detailed

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[1] *Le Galant escroc* has traces of different genres, including the *drame* and the *genre larmoyant*. This point is discussed further in Chapter 5, pp. 140-143.

account of the theatrical traditions upheld by the Jesuits when discussing *les théâtres d'amateurs* (*La Vie théâtrale en France au dix-huitième siècle*, pp. 297-314. See also Hemmings and Boncompain).[2] Rougemont emphasizes the huge impact of this early acting experience on the young Jesuit students: they got a certain taste for acting, an experience of performing for an audience. Many authors and actors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had their first contact with the theatre through school performances. The Jesuit influence was strong right up until 1762, when they were expelled from France for political reasons; after this date, school theatrical performances were few and far between.

The Jesuit influence was not only visible in Paris; the eighteenth century saw a rapid growth in the number of theatres being built in the provinces. Most theatres were built at seaports and in garrison towns, so that audience numbers were boosted by travellers and soldiers seeking entertainment. These theatres tended to be funded by wealthy shareholders who had some influence with the king and so faced fewer problems with gaining building permission and ownership rights. The authorities argued that the theatre was a harmless form of entertainment, and soldiers and travellers would do better to go there than to frequent brothels and bars. A theatre meant that a town had a certain amount of prestige; often these theatres would be run at a loss, just so that the town could enjoy the reputation of having a splendid theatre; Hemmings gives the example of the theatre built by Richelieu in

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[2] Jesuit school pupils were encouraged to act by their parents and teachers; it was a means for them to gain a certain amount of confidence, and their performances were quite often open to the public (the *collège de Louis le Grand* in Paris could house up to 4,000 spectators in 1730). The performances were not simply for the pupils' benefit, however: this was a type of propaganda for the Jesuit order, as the plays chosen were often deliberate attempts to comment on local or national events.

Bordeaux: it was certainly an impressive building, but no one could afford to run it. Rouen was the one main exception, with the *théâtre des Arts* being run very successfully by Mlle Montansier. The main problem, however, was that there was very little innovation in the provincial theatres, unlike in Paris where the repertoire was constantly changing in the major and minor theatres.

Although the increase in the number of provincial theatres is significant, Paris remained the most important setting for theatrical activity. There were three main sections of theatrical entertainment: the royal theatres (i.e. the Comédie-française, Comédie-italienne and the Opéra); the minor public theatres (*théâtres de la foire*, Boulevard theatres); and the privately-owned theatres, which were an extension of the salon tradition of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, there is not a clear distinction of genres and audience attendance between these three sections, as will become clearer when I look at each type of venue in turn and the genres typical of each venue.

THE ROYAL THEATRES

In this assessment of the royal theatres, I have not included a discussion of the Opéra, as it has no direct relevance to my analysis of *Le Galant escroc*. Instead, I shall concentrate on the Comédie-italienne and the Comédie-française, and more particularly on the Comédie-française, as it was the most prestigious theatre in Paris. A discussion of the royal theatres brings different aspects about eighteenth-century theatre into question, such as the status of the actors and censorship. I shall comment further on these aspects in relation to Collé's work in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Comédie-italienne

To trace the origins of the foundation of the Comédie-italienne, one has to go right back to the travelling companies of the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, which became popular in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These companies used very basic scenery and props, and their performance was based on improvisation: there were a number of stock characters and the audience grew to expect these characters to behave in a certain way, but there were no fixed scripts. The actors relied on each other's ingenuity and skill. An Italian troupe was first officially invited to France by Catherine de Medici, but the Parlement did not permit them to stay in the country, claiming that they charged too much to the spectators. The real reason, however, was that the Italians represented a threat to the French *comédiens royaux*; although the plays were in Italian, many French people had some understanding of the language, and the amount of physical humour meant that the comedies were easy to follow (see Bernardin, 1969, pp. 7-9). These were the early signs of a spirit of competition which came to a head in the eighteenth century.

In the seventeenth century, Italian troupes came more often to perform in Paris; for some time they enjoyed the support of Louis XIV, particularly when the *comédiens français* complained so bitterly when the Italians started to introduce some French into their plays (the first of these plays was *Le Régal des dames*, 1668). They found most success with the comedies of Dufresny and Regnard, as such comedies gave them some scope for improvisation. In 1697, however, a supposed slight to Mme de Maintenon caused the king to banish the Italian actors from Paris, and they did not return until after the king's death in 1716. They re-

established their company in the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, calling it the Comédie-italienne to distinguish it from the Comédie-française.

The Comédie-italienne had to adapt to the tastes of the French public, as Italian was no longer in vogue. By far the most famous dramatist of the Italian theatre in the first half of the eighteenth century was Marivaux; for a brief, but comprehensive outline of his contribution to the popularity of the Comédie-italienne, as well as that of Favart and Delisle de la Drévetière, see Bernardin, 1969, pp. 180-206.

The Comédie-italienne found a major source of competition in the form of the *Opéra-comique* (see below, pp. 45-47). Having tried unsuccessfully to restrict the repertoire of the *Comique*, the Italians decided instead to incorporate this repertoire into their own. They were supported in this venture by the king, who had a decided interest in elevating the status of the *Opéra-comique*. It was an extremely popular form of entertainment, but was associated with fairground theatres and the plays were not deemed morally suitable or dignified enough to be performed at Court. Once associated with one of the royal theatres, the queen and members of the court could attend performances without embarrassment. This merger proved to be extremely profitable for the Comédie-italienne, so much so that by 1779 the *opéra-comique* was the only genre being performed and the theatre was being referred to as the new *Opéra-comique* (see Isherwood, 1986, Chapter 5). The Italians were still fearful of links with the *forain* and Boulevard theatres, but by then the genre has ceased to be 'popular' theatre, and had shaken off its old image.

The Comédie-française

The most prestigious of the royal theatres was the Comédie-française which, according to Alasseur, enjoyed several periods of prosperity in terms of audience numbers: from 1680 to around 1722, and from 1757 until the Revolution (Alasseur, 1967, p. 11). Collé's diaries are full of anecdotes about his visits to the Comédie-française; the new plays, the actors, audience reaction and so on. There is no doubt that this theatre was of major interest to him and, as mentioned in Chapter 1, it flattered his ego when plays such as *Dupuis et Desronais* were performed successfully by the talented *comédiens du roi*.

The Comédie-française actors had the support of the Crown, the high courts and the police when it came to exerting what they saw as their exclusive right to perform theatrical works in French, much to the detriment of the *forain* and *Boulevard* theatres, whose directors had to use many ploys to overcome the heavy restrictions placed upon them (for further discussion of the *forain* and Boulevard theatres, see pp. 44-49). The basis of these persistent claims to theatrical monopoly was the royal ordinance of 21 October 1680, granting the Comédie-française actors the sole right to perform tragedy, and comedy in French. The royal theatres were seen by Louis XIV as a direct representation of his prestige and this law emphasized their importance and established a national theatre which was symbolically significant. The theatre also had a reputation for excellence in Europe, the registers often indicating the presence of important figures at the Comédie-française performances (Alasseur, 1967, p. 11).

The size of the audiences at the Comédie-française is very difficult to ascertain, as the records are not altogether precise: the

director and actors did not declare the *loges* in their accounts for example, as a means of being able to pay the authors less than they should be. Lough, however, provides some estimations in his *Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. The first Comédie-française theatre in the Rue des Fosses Saint-Germain could accommodate over 2000 people; the largest total of paying spectators for one performance seems to be 1586. The first 49 performances of *Le Mariage de Figaro* attracted over 1400 spectators: this play was rivalled by Collé's *La Partie de chasse*... in terms of numbers of performances, and so one can gauge at least to some extent the number of spectators who may have seen his play. The same spectators, however, went to each show: Lough also mentions that in the 1760s the 'best people' liked to attend the Comédie-française, the Comédie-italienne and the Opéra in one evening: going to the theatre was a social occasion – the performances concerned may not have been relevant to some. The shows did, of course, provide a talking-point in social circles, and to miss a first performance of a famous author's play (however successful or unsuccessful it turned out to be) was a major lack in a person's social awareness.

A similar problem arises when trying to assess the composition – in social terms – of the audiences attending any of the royal theatres. In practical terms, there would have been a clear dividing point between those able to afford the fairly high admission costs and those who were not. Alasseur again provides some useful information to demonstrate this point: the cheapest ticket into the Comédie-française in the period between 1753 and 1774 was admission to the *parterre* at 1 livre – the equivalent of a full day's work (at best) for a working-class citizen. It seems likely,

therefore, that the working classes rarely attended the royal theatres.[3]

At the other end of the social scale, the duc d'Orléans, who hired a *baignoire* at the Comédie-française at a cost of 6000 L a year in 1767, which corresponds to eight months of an actor's salary at the Comédie-française. Not only does this prove the wealth of the duc as Collé's main benefactor, it also shows that despite his interest in his own private theatres, the Comédie-française was very much part of his social outlet.

Were the royal theatres, then, reserved for the elite, the upper classes of this society in the eighteenth century? There is no doubt that the elite attended the royal theatres: as mentioned before, the Comédie-française in particular was a symbol of prestige. However, the social structure of the audience was gradually changing around the time of the first performances of *Le Galant escroc*:

> French society in these two centuries was in a constant state of slow evolution, which was undoubtedly reflected in the theatre audiences of Paris, particularly in the last decades before 1789. There is evidence to show that from about 1760 onwards a more plebeian type of spectator began to infiltrate into the hitherto somewhat exclusive audiences of the two main Paris theatres, the Comédie-française and the Théâtre italien. At the same time the educated sections of the middle classes continued to frequent the theatre, and to do so in a society in which the section of the community to which they belonged was assuming an even greater importance. Yet until the Revolution came to destroy the society of the Ancien Régime, the upper classes of society – the court nobility, the *Parlementaires*, the bankers and tax-farmers, together with their

[3] Their only real chance to see the royal actors performing was when the king gave permission for a free performance to mark a special occasion. One example is in 1781, when Voltaire's *Adélaide de Guesclin* and Collé's *La Partie...* were performed to honour the birth of the dauphin.

> womenfolk – what is known for convenience as *le monde* – continued to form an important part of the theatre audience and to mould to their taste the drama of the age.
>
> Lough, 1957, p. 270.

The bourgeoisie did attend the Comédie-française: in many cases, their wealth would perhaps not be enough to pay for the best seats in the theatre, and so they would have occupied the *parterre*. As women were not permitted in the *parterre*, this would have meant that very few *femmes bourgeoises* – other than those who had extremely wealthy husbands – would have regularly attended the Comédie-française.

The reaction of the *parterre* was an extremely important factor in the success or failure of a play. Having first passed the rigorous examination of the censors and the *comédiens du roi*, the *parterre* was really the final judge which the author had to face. An example of the power of the *parterre* is the audience reaction to *La Partie de chasse...* The original problem lay with Louis XV's fear of unfavourable comparisons made between himself and Henri IV, which caused him to ban the play until 1774. However, the first dress rehearsal proper by the Comédie-française actors in 1781 coincided with the dismissal in Paris of Jacques Necker, the *directeur-général des finances*. The possible dismissal of Sully in the first act of *La Partie...* was compared to Necker's dismissal by the Paris audiences. Necker had tried to avert the risk of national bankruptcy by curtailing the substantial financial privileges of prominent members of the first and second estates. As these men were also influential members of the Court society, Necker lost their support in the same way that Sully is seen to be isolated in act one. There is no way that Collé could have foreseen this particular

connection: Necker had not even been appointed when the play was written (1768). This is no deliberate allusion made by the author; this is an application which has been made by the audiences. The *parterre* was an extremely powerful force: their awareness of contemporary events could make or break a particular play, and the author could sometimes have no control over audience reaction. A few attentive spectators could encourage this phenomenon, sometimes resulting in a practical riot (see Gaiffe, 1971, p. 141 for examples.)

The important role which the Comédie-française played in this society was also reflected by the power and the prestige of its actors. Some of the actors became popular public figures; Boncompain relates the story of Molé being unwell, and being prescribed wine as a remedy by his doctor. Such was his popularity that he ended up being sent around 2000 bottles by his friends of the nobility (Boncompain, 1976, p. 38). The Comédie-française actors felt themselves to be superior to all other actors, including those from the Comédie-italienne and the Opéra. They exerted a lot of power over the authors, letting their personal caprices take precedent over considerations for the writers (see Peyronnet, 1974, e.g. p. 79. He highlights the influence of actors such as Le Kain and Mlle Clairon, whose personal aura was such that they could practically take over a full production.) As already mentioned in Chapter 1, arguments between authors and actors were commonplace, and there was always a good deal of contention between them. The main problem which the authors faced was the fact that the Comédie-française actors had no real competition when it came to 'serious' works, apart from perhaps the Comédie-italienne which, although popular amongst the theatre-going

public, did not have the same prestige as the Comédie-française. The result was that the authors could sometimes be treated with contempt by the actors, who had the power to accept or reject their play.

The actors did not have it all their own way, however. They were under immense pressure to tailor their technique to the requirements of the highly critical Comédie-française audience. Boncompain quotes the example of the highly successful actor Dufresne once having to apologize to the audience for shouting back at someone who had told him to speak louder (Boncompain, 1976, p. 39). Another actress who replaced the word *perdue* with *foutue* in a song was escorted to prison: this is a further indication of how some of Collé's writing (*Le Galant escroc* included) would not have been considered suitable for the *bienséances* of the Comédie-française.

The actors also had to bear the harsh judgements imposed by the Church: once an actor chose to go on stage, he was immediately excommunicated, and would not be given a Christian burial unless he renounced his profession before dying. This applied to all the acting profession, although the actors of the Opéra seem to have been the one exception, since they were members of an 'Academy' under royal patronage (their degree of morality, however, being no stricter). The actors of the Comédie-française were in a curious position: they were loved by the general public, and yet they were publicly denounced by the Church. The actors constantly tried to prove their honour by making charitable gestures like giving money to the poor. Their generosity was, in fact, extended to the Church which, despite its denunciation of the theatre, was hypocritical enough to accept donations – provided of

course that the actors did not expect any public sign of gratitude (see Alasseur, 1967, p. 17; also Boncompain, 1976, p. 43 and McManners, 1986). Such hypocrisy on the part of the Church did not go unnoticed, and authors often exposed the dubious morals of Church officials. Collé's *La Vérité dans le vin* was considered a bit too risqué by the duc d'Orléans for even the private theatres, and Collé was forced to rewrite it, replacing the original character of the archbishop. To satirize the hypocrisy of the Church on the national public stage would therefore have been unthinkable.

The attitude of the Church is a further indication of how powerful a weapon the theatre was seen to be in terms of its influence over a wide spectrum of this society. As mentioned before, some plays were capable of rousing the emotions of the members of the *parterre*: theatrical performances, unlike written material, had an immediate effect on a large group of spectators. The implication is that the system of censorship would have been extremely strict, and this was true up to a certain point.

Censorship

The subsidies provided by Louis XIV meant that the actors of the Comédie-française came to be known as the *comédiens du Roi*, and as they were dependent on his money and continuing support, they were under his control. The king delegated four noblemen to act as censors for the theatres; in reality, these men were seen as despots by the actors, who were frightened of doing something to upset them, lest they should be sent to prison. Collé comments on the power of the *gentilshommes de la chambre* in his diary, dated February 1764:

Les Comédiens, par leur mauvaise conduite et le délabrement de leurs affaires, ont étés forcés de recourir aux gentilhommes de la chambre, et se sont mis par là sous le plus cruel despotisme; au point que ces tyrans se sont acquis actuellement le droit de renvoyer des Comédiens au bout de vingt ans, vingt-cinq ans de service, sans qu'ils puissent appeler de cet arrêt. Ils n'étoient point autrefois dans ce servile assujettissement; ils se gouvernoient eux-mêmes d'une façon républicaine; personne ne mettoit le nez dans les affaires de la troupe; ils ne dépendoient des premiers gentilshommes qu'en ce qui regardeoit le service de la cour. Je ne plains point les Comédiens, il faudroit avoir de la pitié de reste pour en conserver pour de pareils hommes; mais le public souffre de ce cruel despotisme. Ce sont ces grands messieurs qui, pour en jouir avec plus de sûreté, ont établi une garde tyrannique qui gêne les suffrages et la liberté publique; ils font, moyennant cela, recevoir les acteurs et les actrices qui leur plaisent.

Collé, *Journal* 2, pp. 338-339.

The rules governing the publication of plays or literature of any kind were also under the control of the king. Between 1750 and 1763, the supervision of the publishing industry and the censorship system were in the hands of Malesherbes. He was also responsible for supervising the actvities of the men appointed as royal censors (by 1762 there were 122 censors, with 60 names in the general field of literature and history – see Williams, 1975, p. 301). The job of censoring was not a popular one: the censors feared reprisal from any authors whose books they refused. A number of laws existed to guide the censors. However, there was widespread abuse of these laws at various steps along the way of a book being published. The law favoured the booksellers in Paris, as only one publisher would be granted the right to publish a particular work, hence the authors found that their profits dwindled as their publisher could

practically hold them to ransom, as they were in control of how many books would be published.

The censorship system was a complicated process at this time and there were many loopholes which allowed for books deemed 'unsuitable' to be published. A comprehensive discussion of the system can be found in Williams, in the chapter entitled *Censorship and Subterfuge in Eighteenth-Century France* (Williams, 1975, pp. 287- 309). The reasons for a book not being allowed to be published were varied, and quite often it depended on the individual opinion of the censor concerned. In the case of Collé, some of his plays may have been altered in order to get past the censors: the private theatre atmosphere allowed for a degree of licentiousness which the authorities could consider unsuitable for the general public. However, licentious works could be published secretly, with the censor concerned going as far as to encourage clandestine operations. One case in particular is described by Edward P. Shaw:

> Censors found it useful to suggest sale of books under the cloak, an illegal procedure. A reviewer of licentious tales was willing to follow the policy of ignoring the fact that they existed. Permitting the illicit distribution of an obviously lascivious tale he added the curious statement that, except for a few lines describing the lubricity of a monk, one could not write more decently on such an indecent subject.
>
> Shaw, in Williams, 1975, pp. 308-309.

The censorship system was in a state of chaos: the above is only one example of the many ways in which illicit works could be distributed. Authors, however, needed to be careful, as they were

in danger of facing a prison sentence if the censors felt this step was necessary to 'protect' the public from works judged inappropriate.

In Chapter 5, I shall comment on those aspects of *Le galant escroc* which would have made it unsuitable for performance at the royal theatres in Paris. It is not that Collé was incapable of writing such plays; his *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV* was one of the most performed plays at the Comédie-française during the late second half of the eighteenth century. However, his *théâtre de société* could be seen as an alternative to those plays deemed suitable for royal theatre performances, as will become clear in Chapter 5.

THE MINOR PUBLIC THEATRES

Theatrical entertainment in Paris was a reciprocal process between the lifestyle of its inhabitants and their observers, i.e. the authors and directors responsible for providing entertainment for the masses. A feature of Parisian lifestyle which directly affected the development of the theatre was what is referred to as the *Pont neuf* tradition (see Isherwood, 1986, Chapter 1). The Pont neuf was one of the meeting-places for merchants to sell their wares: each merchant would chant or sing to attract customers, the intonation depending on the particular item for sale. The term *poissardes*, originally designating haranguing fishwives, came to be used as meaning the tradesman and tradeswomen and their street banter. The sociolect and intonations of the *poissarde* tradition were adopted by the artists and singers of the period, and Collé was one of the best-known songwriters.

These songs came to be a means of spreading scandalous rumours about prominent figures in public life, and commenting on current events in general. The popular tunes were used by

authors for their *vaudevilles* and *parades*, which were the main genres adopted by the *théâtres de la foire* and the Boulevard theatres (both of which will be discussed in more detail at a later point in this chapter). The *Pont neuf* tradition also spread to the private theatres: as already mentioned in chapter one, the early part of Collé's career was devoted to writing songs and *parades*, both of which reflected the derisive, bawdy wit which was so much a feature of popular entertainment. Collé was one of the main authors responsible for bringing the *Pont neuf* tradition into the private theatres, mirroring the coarse language of the marketplace atmosphere. An example of this type of language is included in Chapter 4, pp. 119-120.

What, then, is meant exactly by the terms *vaudevilles* and *parades*? Rougemont describes the genre of the *vaudeville* in the following terms:

> Sa vocation plaisante, volontiers satirique, joue sur le rapport de familiarité et de surprise que suscitent des paroles nouvelles sur un air connu, une sorte de *lapsus linguae* permanent et volontaire, une accumulation d'équivoques. Cette donnée du genre en exclut la gravité, le respectable, et l'oriente plutôt vers la parodie ou le *pasticcio*, soit vers le libertinage et la grivoiserie. Le langage qu'on appelle alors en anglais ou en allemand, naïvement, le "double entendre", trouve ici une de ses sources principales, et sera considéré dès le XVIII^{e} siècle comme une des originalités (sinon vraiment des qualités) de la littérature, comme des mœurs françaises, aussi bien que l'esprit de conversation.
>
> Rougemont, 1988, p. 45.

This genre, therefore, is essentially derisive and although some of them were very cleverly worked, the *vaudevilles* were always considered of fairly low stature in literary terms. There is a general

trend, particularly towards the 1760s, to edge away from licentious, bawdy songs towards something slightly more serious.

The *parade* was a term which originally designated a short play, or number of scenes performed on the outside balcony or at the door of a theatre, to encourage passers-by to come in and watch the whole performance. The actors, or *bateleurs*, would act out slapstick scenes, sometimes wearing masks. The term *parade* was also extended to short, burlesque plays which, according to Du Bled, reached the height of their popularity in the 1730s. He describes the genre as having the following features:

> [..] C'est une manière de théâtre libre, de café-concert à domicile, ce sont les farces de la foire, de Tabarin et de Bruscambille, de l'ancien théâtre italien, transportées dans les salons, pour se reposer de la comédie sérieuse et du beau langage, pour donner pâture au Gaulois qui est en nous. Expressions grivoises et paysannes, parodies, allusions ridicules, style poissard, fausses liaisons, jeux de mots, calembours stercoraires, gaillardises truculentes composent son domaine: égayer et faire rire, trouver des spectateurs assez peu rigoristes pour ne point raisonner leur plaisir, persuader à ceux-ci que là où la vertu règne ou semble régner, la bienséance est inutile, que la décence est presque toujours le masque du vice, voilà son programme.
>
> Du Bled, 1893, pp. 89-90.

The *parades*, therefore, were originally plays performed free of charge to attract *le bas peuple*: the bawdy humour focused on bodily necessities, and the plot usually centred around deceit in social relationships. These plays were not reserved for the masses, however. Authors such as Gueulette, Carmontelle and Collé introduced such plays into the private theatres of the middle and upper classes. Collé describes the audience reaction to these plays in his diary:

> Ces scènes croustilleuses, la manière dont elles étaient rendues, la franche gaieté qu'ils y mettaient, les ordures gaillardes, enfin jusqu'à leur prononciation vicieuse et pleine de cuirs, faisaient rire à gueule ouverte et à ventre déboutonné tous ces seigneurs de la cour, qui n'étaient pas tout à fait dans l'habitude d'être grossiers et de voir chez le roi des joyeusetés aussi libres, quoiqu'ils fussent dans l'intimité du défunt Louis XV.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 2 p. 87.

Collé's own *parades* were so popular that Louis XVI, in his eagerness to read some of Collé's unpublished *parades*, broke down the doors of Collé's home in his absence. Du Bled recounts the story: unfortunately, there is no date or source given for this incident, but it is nonetheless amusing, and illustrates the popularity of the *parade* even amongst the highest ranks of this society (Du Bled, 1893, pp. 93-94).

Isherwood provides a list of some of the private theatres 'where the bawdiest, most obscene farces and *parades* of the streets were performed' (Isherwood, 1986, p. 34). This list includes the hôtel of the comte de Clermont, for whom Collé provided some of the entertainment. The *parades* published by Collé are highly suggestive, but not pornographic, although they may well have been rewritten as a means of getting past the censors. As the *parades* were being performed by the friends and acquaintances of the theatre owners, there would have been room for improvisation on their part, if they chose to do so.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Collé did come to reject the *parade* as a genre, turning to the less farcical *théâtre de société* instead. According to Littré, the term *parade* had a slightly different meaning by the 1760s:

Par une autre extension, mauvaises pièces de théâtre. "Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait une ville de province dans laquelle on pût acheter la représentation de ces parades qui ont été applaudies à Paris."

Voltaire. *Lett. à d'Argental*, 2 Sept. 1767, in Littré.

There are still, however, some elements of the *parade* which have been adapted to form the more serious *théâtre de société*: this is a point which I shall discuss in greater detail in my chapter on an analysis of *Le Galant escroc*.

The *vaudevilles* and *parades* were the main genres performed at the fair theatres in Paris, the *théâtres de la foire*. There were two main fairgrounds in Paris: the Foire Saint-Laurent and the Foire Saint-Germain (est. 1678). It is difficult to establish the specific traits which characterized the originality of these theatres, as they frequently borrowed traits from other theatre companies, and were in turn plagiarized (cf. *Inversions and Subversions...* in Rex, 1987, p.51). When the Italian troupes were forced to leave Paris in 1697 by order of the king, the *théâtres de la foire* were able to take advantage of the *commedia dell'arte* repertoire. Their much less extravagant productions meant that tickets were considerably cheaper than the royal theatres, and so the working classes could afford to attend. Those who could not afford theatre tickets could at least enjoy the atmosphere, and watch the free *parades*. According to Hemmings, the State saw these theatres as harmless relaxation for the lower orders. The *forains* were popular with the police: if the public was being amused, there was less chance of crime being committed. Any itinerant companies who wanted to perform at these *forains* were supervised up to a certain point; by a law set up in 1706, these

companies had to obtain permission from the police before entering a town (see Hemmings, 1994, p. 25).

The *théâtres de la foire*, however, proved to be a source of serious competition to the royal theatres, as the wealthier classes were becoming more and more disillusioned with the staid repertoires of the Comédie-française, Comédie-italienne and Opéra. The *forain* theatres would parody the plays and the acting of the *comédiens du Roi*, who deeply resented the insults and the competition. The fair theatres cannot be dismissed as simple amusement for the masses, not if one considers the strong reactions of the privileged theatres in their attempts to defend themselves.

In 1707, the royal theatres, with the support of the king, forbade the use of dialogue by the *forain* theatres: to get round this restriction, the *forain* actors simply used one spokesperson throughout the whole play, whose monologues told the story and mimicked the words of the other actors. The success of this ploy enraged the Comédie-française actors even further; three years later, they forbade monologues, forcing the *forain* actors to use scrolls instead, with each actor showing his role to the audience on large pieces of paper. Visual humour was obviously vital to the success of these plays, as not everyone in the audience would have been able to read. However, the royal theatres were more concerned about those members of the *forain* theatre audiences who normally attended the royal theatres, i.e. the wealthy, educated middle and upper classes.

In 1719 the Comédie-française effectively managed to suppress the *forain* theatres, restricting them to acrobatic and puppet shows. It was only really under the reign of Louis XV that the *forain* theatres were saved from extinction, as in 1724 one of the

main *théâtres de la foire*, the *Opéra Comique*, was established by Maurice Honoré. Isherwood relates how the *Comique* became the fair public's favourite diversion (Isherwood, 1986, Chapter 3), and as such it came under attack from the Comédie-française, and more particularly from the Comédie-italienne, whose plays it tended to parody. The genre of the *opéra-comique* was associated with several elements: the plays included many *vaudevilles*, or music was 'borrowed' from the Opéra and used again as a means of parodying this image of the royal theatres as being the only companies capable of performing plays for an elite culture. The restrictions imposed by the royal theatres also caused the actors of the *Opéra-comique* to turn to other means to amuse the public: dancing and acrobatic tumbling were incorporated into their plays, and the bâton was a significant comic prop. A regular cast of stock characters was established, for example Arlequin (impudent rogue), Colombine (the coquette) and Cassandre (the old man). The audience enjoyed seeing the more common characters outwitting the wealthy and educated.

When Charles-François Panard took over the *Opéra-Comique* in 1731, he tried to introduce more elevated characters into the plays. The genre took on another element: that of the mythological world. Utopian lands could be used as settings, with a simple object or device such as a ring or a magic wand being enough to evoke the marvellous. In the period between 1745 and 1752, the *opéra-comique* was closed down, again on the insistence of the Comédie-française and Comédie-italienne. However, during this time the audience numbers at the privileged theatres did not increase, and so the Opéra-Comique was permitted by the king to reopen in 1752. Its popularity in effect doubled: the new director, Monnet,

transformed the genre into a sort of middle path between the coarseness which had come to be expected of the *opéra-comique*, and the more lighthearted genres of the respectable theatres. The favourite character became the humble, naive villager who was experiencing love for the first time. Although the crudeness had gone, the theme of the underdog surviving in a rich man's world was still prominent. The 1750s brought a major musical change to the genre: the *vaudevilles* were largely abandoned in favour of Italian ariettas. Faced with such stiff opposition, the royal theatres needed to take action, culminating in the absorption of the *Comique* by the Comédie-italienne in 1762, as mentioned on p. 30.

According to Alasseur (1967, p. 24), the foires Saint-Germain and Saint-Laurent had begun to decline in public favour by the early 1760s, due partly to the opening of the foire Saint-Ovide in 1762, and also the proliferation of the *théâtres des Boulevards*. The first Boulevard theatres were so called because they were established on the Boulevard du Temple. These theatres were particularly popular amongst *le peuple*, but they lacked the reputation and prestige of the royal theatres. Mercier gives the following account of them in his *Tableau de Paris:*

Le peuple, qui a besoin d'amusements, s'y précipite en foule; mais ces théâtres sont ceux qui mériteraient le plus l'attention du magistrat, et les pièces devraient être des compositions agréables et morales; car il n'y a pas d'opposition entre ces deux mots, quoi qu'en disent les poètes corrupteurs.

Pourquoi ces pièces sont-elles pour la plupart basses, plates, ordurières? C'est qu'une poignée de comédiens ose dire qu'il n'appartient qu'à eux de représenter des pièces raisonnables; c'est qu'on les soutient dans cette ridicule prétention; c'est qu'à la suite de cette incroyable et honteuse législation, le peuple est condamné à n'entendre que l'expression du libertinage et de la sottise. Et voilà

où aboutit la police des spectacles chez un peuple renommé par ses chefs-d'œuvres dramatiques.

Les parades qu'on représente extérieurement sur le balcon comme une espèce d'invitation publique, sont très préjudiciables aux travaux journaliers, en ce qu'elles ameutent une foule d'ouvriers qui, avec les instruments de leur profession sous le bras, demeurent là la bouche béante, et perdent les heures les plus précieuses de la journée.

Mercier, 1990 [1781] *Le Tableau de Paris*, p. 118.

The first Boulevard theatre, run by Jean-Baptiste Nicolet, was established in 1759. These theatres were a means of providing the fair atmosphere all year round. Nicolet was responsible for introducing all manner of entertainment to the French public, including Spanish acrobats (c.f. Hemmings, 1994, p. 27). Nicolet's main rival was Nicolas-Médard Audinot, who formed a theatrical company in 1769. Audinot's repertoire consisted mainly of pantomines and fairy-tales, acted out by children (these children grew up to be the actors of the *Ambigu Comique* which enjoyed enormous success in the late eighteenth century). Nicolet and Audinot both suffered under the restrictions imposed by the privileged theatres in a similar way to the directors of the *théâtres de la foire*. Audinot turned to the use of mime in his plays: his audiences were aware of the fact that the plays were heavily censored, and so clever use of mime meant that the message – usually highly satirical – would get through anyway (see Isherwood, 1986, Chapter 4). In the mid-1780s, Audinot's theatre rejected the use of miming and changed from satirical, burlesque plays to more serious pieces with moral messages. Gaiffe sees this as a reflection of the emergence of the *drame* and *mélodrame* (Gaiffe, 1971, p. 477). Public attitude towards the Boulevard theatres was

changing; where periodicals had previously only listed the programmes of the privileged theatres, by the 1780s they were including the programmes of the Boulevard theatres.

The popularity of the Boulevard and *forain* theatres is a clear sign that people were looking for an alternative to the royal theatre repertories. It is not just a matter of the poorer members of this society looking for a cheap alternative to the exorbitant prices of the royal theatres: the minor public theatres were attended by the wealthier members of this society also. These theatres also had a certain number of restrictions imposed on them, however, mainly due to the intense feelings of rivalry between the actors at the royal theatres and the directors of the minor public theatres. Those plays which Collé wrote for the private theatres provided a similar alternative to royal theatre productions as the minor public theatre repertories aimed to do. The main difference, however, is that Collé did not have to bend to any rules laid down under the influence of the *comédiens royaux*. This lack of restriction is what constitutes the individual nature of plays such as *Le Galant escroc*. The main venue for his play shall now be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

PRIVATE THEATRES

The private theatres were the setting for most of Collé's plays. These theatres are not simply a product of the eighteenth century; Du Bled sees them as a product of history, as miniature court gatherings:

> [...] Avec son roi ou sa reine, les favoris, quelques amis dévoués, la masse des indifférents, avec les petites intrigues d'ambition ou d'amour, et ce mélange d'historiettes, de sentiments

nobles ou mesquins, de conversations élevées parfois, plus souvent oiseuses qui partout forment la trame de la vie humaine.

Du Bled, 1893, pp. 2-3.

These establishments were an extension of the salon society which was so prominent at the height at the end of the seventeenth century and first half of the eighteenth century. The most famous of these salons were those of Mme de Lambert (1692-1733) and of Mme de Tencin (1726-1749): these salons provided a forum for literary discussion:

[...] où se réfugie l'honnêteté et où, en réaction justement contre la grossièreté des mœurs de la Régence, se développe la nouvelle préciosité, dont Marivaux, leur hôte, participe; les femmes, lasses de manières trop directes qui réduisent l'amour à une physique, réclament le respect et la délicatesse d'une métaphysique d'amour.

Versini, 1988, p. 13.[4]

By the 1750s, the salon phenomenom still existed as such, but amateur dramatics played more of a key role in the social interaction of those present:

Avant le bal, le théâtre est évidemment l'activité la plus satisfaisante: il cimente la société non seulement dans le temps de la représentation, mais pendant les semaines ou les mois de répétitions, il crée plus d'intimité entre les acteurs que la danse elle même (avant la mode da la valse), et il les soutient par l'existence d'un texte qu'il suffit d'apprendre et qu'il ne faut pas inventer comme celui de la conversation.

Rougemont, 1988, pp. 310-311.

The type of entertainment which was typical of the repertoire of the minor theatres, as outlined above, was adopted by the *seigneurs de haut parage* who would attend the *forain* and

[4] See also Brunetière, 1912, pp. 102-111.

Boulevard theatres.The *gens du monde* tried their hand at acting, and some of them did extremely well – so much so that Du Bled claims they rivalled the professional actors of the royal theatres to a certain extent[5]; at one point the number of private theatres numbered 160 in Paris (Du Bled, 1893, p. 5). The *parades* which were so popular in the minor theatres, and the comedy of the streets were adapted to suit the tastes of high society in the private theatres. Women of high birth were able to consort with actresses and enjoy a certain amount of sexual freedom in these theatres without being classed publicly as prostitutes; their defence being that they were acting as patrons of the arts. Isherwood lists the main private theatres as being the following: the hôtels of Sourdéac, Soyecourt, Clermont, Villeroy and Chaussée d'Antin and the châteaux of Sceaux, Bagatelle and Chantilly (Isherwood, 1986, p.34). Before looking at those theatres in which Collé's plays are known to have predominantly figured, I shall look briefly at the overall impact of the private theatres in Paris, as the whole of the social spectrum was affected, not just the *seigneurs* and their mistresses.

Although condemned by the Church, the privileged theatres enjoyed the protection of the court in the eighteenth century, and the *comédiens du roi* were invited regularly to Versailles or Fontainebleau to give a private performance to the king and his courtiers. A brief account of the theatre at court during the period with which I am most concerned shows a vogue for the theatre which reflected what was happening in the rest of society. One of

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[5] Du Bled's comment casts the professional actors in a slightly unfavourable light. The distinction between amateur and professional actors was much smaller compared with today's equivalents, as the *comédiens du roi* were operating under extremely poor conditions, and often had to perform several plays in one evening, making it difficult for them to learn their lines. Further discussion of theatre conditions in the eighteenth century can be found in Peyronnet's *La Mise en scène au dix-huitième siècle.*

the leading proponents of the theatre at court was Mme de Pompadour. Having gained permission from Louis XV to inaugurate her own theatre in 1747, she set about creating a magnificent establishment, with several troupes (both for acting and opera), a magnificent orchestra, renowned costume makers, lavish scenery and props: the annual budget came to more than 230, 000 livres, and was paid for by the king. In order to become a *sociétaire*, some experience of acting was called for: although the theatre was intended for the amusement of Mme de Pompadour and her friends and associates, it was nonetheless a professionally-organized body of actors. The duc d'Orléans is listed in the names of members provided by Du Bled, along with the the ducs d'Ayen, de Coigny, de Nivernois, de Duras, comte de Maillebois, marquis du Coutenvaux, marquis d'Entraigues; marquise de Pompadour, duchesse de Brancas, comtesse d'Estrades, marquise de Livry and madame de Marchais. Even if they were not taking part in the particular play, the members had permission to attend each performance, and there was a *loge* to accommodate those actresses who were not taking part. The type of play which was chosen varied: the opening performance was that of Molière's *Tartuffe*. The repertoire also included plays which were more typical of the Comédie Italienne, such as Dancourt's *Les Trois Cousines* and Dufresny's *L'Esprit de Contradiction*. There is no evidence of any of Collé's plays being performed at this theatre: his earlier *parades* would almost certainly have been considered too risqué for the king's theatre, although many of its members – the duc d'Orléans in particular – would have had some knowledge of his writing.

During the reign of Louis XVI, the most influential member of the court in terms of the theatre was Marie-Antoinette. She was

known to have attended performances at the Opéra, although this was considered unsuitable for someone of her position. Brushing her critics aside, Marie-Antoinette pursued her love for the theatre, imitating Mme de Pompadour in the sense that money was no object. The members of the Comédie-française and Comédie-italienne were frequently called to court, again at great expense to the king. Du Bled points out that during a single season, the Comédie-italienne appeared 13 times, and the Comédie-française 25 times in total, representing an expenditure of 24 050 livres. Louis XVI was said at first to show his displeasure for the numerous performances, but his own love for *parades* and parodies eventually led him to change his mind.

Once again, the court members also put on performances, and comedy was their main interest. Sedaine's *Le Roi et le fermier* was the first play to be performed, with the queen amongst the cast. However, according to Du Bled, there were many unfavourable comparisons made between Marie-Antoinette's theatre and those of the duc d'Orléans and the former dancer Mlle Guimard. Although the private court theatres reveal the extent of the theatre's popularity in France in the eighteenth century, there is no doubt that the private theatres of the wealthy in Paris were the most influential and innovative of all.

One of the most famous private theatres – in which Collé's plays were performed, notably *La Partie de chasse...* (Hemmings, 1994, p. 226 and Boncompain, 1976, p. 35) – was that of Mlle Guimard at the Chaussée d'Antin. She began her career as a ballerina at the Opéra, and she managed to achieve considerable wealth through being the mistress of a succession of wealthy and influential noblemen. Guimard was only one of many actresses,

singers or dancers who were favoured as mistresses by noblemen: many actresses chose their careers as an easy entry into the lives of the rich, and their lifestyle was often more regal than the wives of the noblemen concerned.

According to Hemmings, Guimard was notorious for the pornographic displays she was known to put on at her theatres, of which most of the texts have disappeared (Hemmings, 1994, pp. 226-227). As there was this element of pornographic content in the plays, women who attended the performances would try (and fail) to remain anonymous by sitting in little *loges* fitted with grates which they could hide behind. Boncompain stresses the popularity and success of evenings spent at La Guimard's private theatre (Boncompain, 1976, pp. 34-36). He relates the story of a particular evening arranged by one of La Guimard's young male friends at the Chaussée d'Antin, which was to include the performance of some *proverbes galants* by Collé. Actresses who attended the performance took along chaperons to help prevent talk of scandal. Also among those present were the notable figures of the comte d'Artois and le duc de Chartres (the date is given as 1770, so this must be the duc d'Orléans' son, rather than Collé's actual benefactor). The hôtel was being paid for by the évêque d'Orléans, M. de Jarente who, like many other archbishops at the time, was in considerable debt due to his extravagant lifestyle.

La Guimard's theatre was not simply a playground to accommodate the licentious tastes of high society. Private theatres normally escaped censorship as there were no entrance fees charged; this provided the opportunity for the Comédie-française actors, for example, to perform the hitherto banned *La Partie...* at Guimard's mansion at Passy on 7 December 1768, and also to

inaugurate her town house in the Chaussée d'Antin on 8 December 1772 (see Hemmings, 1994, p. 226).

The two main theatres with which Collé was directly involved were those of the comte de Clermont and the duc d'Orléans, who actually rivalled one another in terms of their success as theatre owners. An account of the lifestyle of the comte de Clermont is given by Du Bled (1893, pp. 96-127). Clermont seems to have led a colourful existence, combining a career in the army with one in the church, using his influence to be elected as a member of the Académie, and resigning shortly afterwards when friends and relations suggested such a position was not worthy of the attention of someone of his social standing. Clermont was quite a wealthy man, but his fortune dwindled as he tried to give financial support to his many mistresses. According to Du Bled, all this was combined with a great degree of generosity towards his friends and an aimiable disposition: his wayward ways were a result of the bad influence of others.

Clermont's military career earned him the reputation of being valiant, but lacking in tactical prowess. Not having achieved the glory he sought, he retired to Berny, his country house, in 1747 and stayed there for ten years, entertaining guests with concerts, theatrical performances etc. It is during this time that Collé's parades were part of the repertoire, as well as those of Laujon and Dancourt, plays by Marivaux and even some of those from the Comédie-française stock. According to Du Bled, those who attended the social gatherings at Berny were known for playing

typical roles in each play; it is interesting to note that Clermont was known to have played the parts of *paysans*, and *financiers*.[6]

Collé's main patron was the duc de Chartres, who was the grandson of the Prince Regent and who inherited the title of duc d'Orléans from his father. Isherwood describes the duc d'Orléans as the most vigorous proponent of society theatre (1986, p. 36). Before inheriting the Orléans chateau at Bagnolet, the duc entertained his social circle at his *petite maison*[7] on the rue Cadet in Montmartre. He invited prominent nobles and young girls to supper, entertaining his guests with performances of obscene *parades*. The duc was a man of some influence and prestige; upon first meeting him, Collé did not realize what was expected of him:

> Je viens de dire que le prince *me fit asseoir*, et à ce sujet je ne puis m'empêcher de remarquer ici mon manque d'usage, quoique ce soit une bien légère circonstance: j'allois m'asseoir, sans que M. de Chartres m'en eût donné la permission, lorsque, me prenant sur le temps, M. de Montauban lui dit avec précipitation: *le prince veut-il bien permettre qu'il soit assis pour lire?* M. de Chartres répondit: *Qu'il s'assoie!* et, ma foi, je crois que je l'étois déjà, ou du moins je m'asseyois dans l'instant.
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> Collé, *Journal* 1, p. 18.

After his father's death, the duc was able to set up a more lavish theatre at the chateau and he hired Collé, and later Carmontelle. The duc also bought two other houses with theatres; one near the entrance to the foire Saint-Laurent, and the other in the faubourg du Roule, where the Parc Monceau is today.

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[6] I have found no proof that *Le Galant escroc* was performed at Berny, although it seems highly likely as it was one of Collé's best-known plays. If so, it is more than likely that the comte played the role of Gasparin. As this is a central figure in the play, it suggests that the comte was an accomplished actor, although the others may have been indulgent towards him as he was the theatre owner, after all.

[7] 'Petite maison, nom donné autrefois à une maison ordinairement située dans un quartier peu fréquenté et destinée à des rendez-vous avec des maîtresses' (Littré).

Private theatres obviously provided a completely different atmosphere to that of the public theatres; they are much more intimate, and the audience and cast knew each other personally. When Collé was editing his diaries at the age of seventy-one, he explains why he got so much pleasure from writing for the duc d'Orléans:

> On y aura vu combien j'ai travaillé, mais on n'y aura pas vu combien j'ai eu de plaisirs à travailler, et ceux surtout que j'ai goûtés pendant plus de vingt ans que le théâtre de monseigneur le duc d'Orléans a subsisté de mon travail. Ce théâtre ne m'a donné que des agréments et point de dégoûts; quand quelques-unes de mes pièces y sont tombées, j'en voyois leur chute en riant; et ce n'étoit que par des badinages agréables qu'on me le faisoit sentir; c'étoit même si légèrement, que j'eusse pu ne pas m'en apercevoir, si je n'avois pas mis de l'*amour-propre* à n'en avoir qu'*un raisonnable.* Vive le théâtre de société! Le théâtre public m'a donné plus de dégoûts que de satisfaction, quoique *Dupuis et Desronais* et *La Partie de Chasse* y aient eu des succès au-delà même de mes espérances; quoique je n'y aie vu tomber que *La Veuve*, qui même a été mal jouée (diroit un autre auteur que moi), mais je passe condamnation, et je voudrois n'avoir que cette plainte-là à faire sur les comédiens; si l'on n'avoit pas pour soi le mépris qu'on fait d'eux et de leurs procédés, on seroit inconsolable.
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> Collé, *Journal* 1, *Notice*, pp. XXII-XXIII.

Some details about the duc's theatre are given in the *Journal;* for example in January 1754, Collé mentions the duc's new theatre at Saint-Martin. The decor was done by a M. Pierre, a famous painter, and the stage was 43 feet wide. The private theatres of the wealthy were luxurious, reflecting the fortune and social prestige of their owners. One cannot dismiss the productions as being amateurish, as a lot of money and time were invested in these theatres.

This brief survey of the theatrical landscape in eighteenth-century France makes it possible to see the specificity of *Le Galant escroc*. Although on first reading it does not appear to be as bawdy as Collé's earlier *parades*, the scope for improvisation at private theatres suggests that the actors are likely to have emphasized any notion of sexual innuendo in the text. The duc d'Orléans attended performances of plays at the Comédie-française but he, like many of his contemporaries, looked for alternative comedy, unaffected by the constraints of public productions. The question of genre in *Le Galant escroc* is the subject of discussion in Chapter 5: I shall necessarily refer back to this chapter in that dicussion.

3

The Social Status of the Characters in *Le Galant escroc*

The strategic decisions concerning a translation of *Le Galant escroc* will necessarily involve an examination of the perceived social status of the characters within the social framework of the eighteenth century. In this chapter, I shall examine the characters' social status as it is likely to have been seen by the eighteenth-century audience; the ways in which this will affect my translation will then be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Much of the humour in the play centres around the fact that Gasparin is a *financier* by profession, and so I shall be concentrating mainly on Gasparin's social status in relation to the others and to the comte and the chevalier in particular. The distinction between their social status is not altogether clear, as class structure in the eighteenth century is difficult to define. As the characters in the play move in the same social circles, it is fair to assume their social status is equal to one another's, although the criteria for having this social status are different for each character. The pointed comments made about Gasparin by the comte in particular[1] also suggest that the *financier* and his wife are still held in less esteem than the characters with noble titles. The reason for this will become clear in the course of this chapter.

A discussion of the social status of all of the characters requires an understanding of the term *noblesse*, and the system of privileges which existed during the Ancien Régime. The characters in the play belong to the upper rungs of the social ladder, although

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[1] See for example Scene 1, 'vous me traitez comme un financier...'; Scene 3, 'je me vengerai de ce petit publicain...'; Scene 5, 'c'est un de ces financiers épais, tels qu'ils étaient autrefois'.

there is a clear distinction in terms of prestige between the *nobles*, i.e. the comte and the chevalier, and the *financier* and his family.[2] I am not, therefore, going to give a detailed account of the lower social orders, other than some details as a point of comparison.

THE *NOBLESSE* OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

This discussion of the nobility in eighteenth-century France is based on works such as the Littré and Robert dictionaries; Carré (1977); Ford (1968) and Mercier (1990) [c. 1767].

There was a nominal division of three orders in this society, which had existed since medieval times: the clergy, the *noblesse* and the *Tiers Etat*. It is the section of society known as the *noblesse* which is of chief concern to the understanding of the characters in *Le Galant escroc*. The term *noblesse* is difficult to define when referring to eighteenth-century French society, as it is not always possible to make a distinction in social terms between a noble family and a wealthy bourgeois family. The main criterion for nobility was some form of recognition by the king, which distinguished the noble from the humble *roturier*, or commoner.There are many distinctions within the classification of *noblesse* itself, the main ones being the following:

Il y avait en France une Noblesse "de race", ou "d'extraction", issue d'un certain nombre de générations nobles; une Noblesse créée par "lettres d'anoblissement"; une Noblesse d'offices; une Noblesse résultant d'acquisitions de fiefs; une Noblesse militaire; une Noblesse municipale, ou "de cloche"; une Noblesse sortie de femmes nobles mariées à des roturiers, et qualifiée "Noblesse du

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[2]As the social status of Sophie and Mme Gasparin depend on that of the head of the household, I shall be concentrating more on an analysis of M. Gasparin's character. However, his wealth and his social standing cast the female dependants in a certain light also, and so I shall return to this point.

ventre"; une Noblesse étrangère reconnue chez des gentilshommes venus de l'étranger.

Carré, 1977, p. 4.

The first of these distinctions – a family having *noblesse de race* – was without doubt the most prestigious. To be thus classed, a family had to have proof of noble origins dating from four generations, with no blots in the family history such as relatives who were merchants or, worse, peasant farmers.[3] It did not matter how long ago this evidence of previous *roture* might be; it could lead to a fine and to the loss of noble status, unless the family concerned could produce some irrefutable proof of ennoblement by the king. A family could also lose its rank by some act of *dérogeance*, i.e. ceasing to live according to their noble status. This applied if the noble undertook any form of manual labour or got involved in trade of any kind:

[...] A noblemen still lost his noblesse and that of all progeny not yet conceived (the medieval concept of tainted blood being recognized by law in favor of earlier children) if he adopted any manual craft save the famous exception of glassmaking or if he entered "for sordid gain" into either retail commerce or the exploitation of another party's land.

Ford, 1968, pp. 25-26.

Nobles had the right to titles: marquis, baron, comte etc. According to the dictionaries, (*Littré*, *le Petit Robert*), the titles of comte and chevalier are *titres de noblesse*: the comte is higher up the social scale than baron, and the chevalier is just beneath it. The title of comte could not be assumed without proof of social origin: it was a title which was inherited by a son from his father. The term chevalier,

[3] For more precise details on what evidence was needed as proof of nobility, see Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword*, 1968.

however, designated several social positions; it is essentially a military term, although it could also be bestowed upon someone who was part of a religious order. It is also the title which was normally assumed by the younger son in a noble family: if his father were a comte for example, this title would be inherited by the oldest son in a family, and his younger brother would be known as a chevalier. As the younger brother also stood to inherit little money from his father, it was also likely that he would join the army or the church as a means of securing some income. The only other solution would be for the chevalier to marry a rich man's daughter, her dowry securing their financial future, in the sense that his noble background, coupled with her money, would enable him to gain promotion within the king's service.

There were certain privileges which the nobility enjoyed which separated them from the lower orders. On a financial level, nobles enjoyed exemption from taxes, militia service, and were not obliged to house soldiers. They were exempt from the *corvée*, which was the obligation to do manual work for the state. Nobles could carry swords and they could go hunting where they wanted. They occupied places of honour at church, which underlined their social position in the local community, and they could have their coat of arms on all their possessions. If they committed a crime, they faced special judges and were spared the harsh punishments which the lower social orders had to face (see Carré, 1977, p. 21 and Ford,1968, p. 28). Louis XV and XVI were indulgent towards the nobles: they were their allies, and were representatives of the splendour and prestige of the French court. As Mercier says in his *Tableau de Paris*, this was the cause of great unrest amongst the

peasants, and also amongst the bourgeois merchants and businessmen, who saw their profits diminish:

> Un bourgeois de Paris paie les trois vingtièmes, les quatre sous pour livre, la capitation, l'industrie, le logement des soldats, le rachat des boues et lanternes; de sorte qu'à bien prendre, il donne au moins, en y comptant les réparations, environ le tiers du revenu de sa maison. Faut-il s'étonner qu'il murmure un peu, et qu'il s'alarme de la mondre augmentation, quand il sait par expérience qu'il y a une force progressive capable de dévorer le tout?
>
> Mercier, 1990 [1781], p. 294.

There was a further distinction within the nobility between *la haute noblesse*, as opposed to the *noblesse*. Those who gained the honour of being admitted to the king's court considered themselves to be *la haute noblesse*; (the nobles were said to have been *présentés*, i.e. introduced directly to the king.) Before Louis XV came to the throne, nobles had to show proof of their lineage before being considered worthy of being *présentés*: Louis XV decreed that he should be the sole judge of who should be included in his group of associates. It was considered a great honour to be in the king's presence, and nobles saw it as a matter of urgency to gain access to the court. A certain amount of snobbishness existed within the nobility as to whether you had been *présenté* or not: Carré explains how some social circles refused to let anyone socialize with them unless they had been *présentés* (Carré, 1977, p. 30).

The lifestyle of the nobility varied according to where they lived: those nobles who lived in châteaux outside Paris, or who owned estates, led the traditional life of the country lord, living off the produce of their land. Hunting was the chief occupation for the men, and their wives would occupy their time with sewing, playing cards and other such pursuits. Those who lived in Paris tended to

lead a completely different lifestyle: their chief concern was pleasure, and quite extravagant sums of money could be spent to this end. The nobility who lived in Paris off the money generated from their estates were known to spend fortunes on extravagant meals, luxurious carriages, and the personal expenditures of their mistresses.

According to Carré, government officials (which include the *financiers*) had a similar lifestyle, the difference being that the officials could actually afford to spend such huge amounts of money. Although these officials for the most part were not *nobles de race*, their financial power meant that they had a lot of influence in this society, and they could move in the same social circles as the *noblesse*. The next section of this chapter is designed to explain the role, and the social status of the *financier* in this society. This will necessarily involve referring back to the social standing of the *noblesse* in more detail; therefore, I will be focusing mainly on the character of Gasparin, but discussing his social status in connection with the other characters in the play.

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE *FINANCIER*

I shall begin this section with a brief look at the profession of *financier* throughout history and how the profession had changed somewhat by the second half of the eighteenth century; this will involve a very basic definition of the profession and is intended really only as background information. I shall then examine the *financier*'s position in eighteenth-century society in more detail, as in reality the *financier* was able to go well beyond the boundaries of his job and take full advantage of the financial chaos under the Ancien Régime. Finally, I shall look at how the *financier* was

portrayed in other works of literature in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, with particular emphasis on the two most famous plays which featured *financiers*: Dancourt's *Le Chevalier à la mode* and Lesage's *Turcaret*.

The *financier*'s rise to power

This sketch of the *financiers*' history is based mainly on the helpful works of Jean Bouvier and Henry Germain-Martin (1964); Yves Durand (1992); William Doyle (1990) and Roland Mousnier (1980).

The profession throughout history has always been difficult to define, as the role and status of the *financier* has differed in France over the centuries. In the thirteenth century for example, it was the Italian businessmen who dominated the world of finance in France, and indeed throughout most of Europe. They were referred to as *financiers* or *banquiers*, and provided the king with products of luxury from abroad. There were some French *financiers*, but their influence seems to have been much more limited. There were, however, early signs that the *financiers* were to form a different cadre of society in France; due to the role they played in providing the king with finances, they could be seen throughout the centuries as an indication of the power of the king in France.

The Italian influence among the *hommes de finance* in France reaches its peak with the Florence Medicis in the fifteenth century. The French-born *financiers* tended to adopt the role of money-lenders on a much smaller scale, depending very much on interest received from loans and very often benefitting from the downfall of others.

The sixteenth century saw a general expansion in the French economy, helped along by the booming import business from

America (via Spain), mostly through the trading of precious stones. However, the king's financial resources still posed a major problem. The main concern in France (and indeed in many other European countries) was the cost of war, the result being that the king had no other alternative but to turn to the *hommes de finance* to provide a steady flow of credit. This period saw the foundation of what were known as *fermes*; a series of collectivities within which the *fermiers*, as intermediaries for the king, had the authority to collect revenues in the form of taxes. This system was still in place in the eighteenth century. The term *financier* is a generic term which includes *fermiers* and denotes a wide variety of professions. Basically, the *fermiers* enabled the king to borrow money without actually being seen as borrowing it, as all they did was provide the king with a continuous flow of credit. The king also resorted to the selling of *offices* as a means of raising immediate cash: this obviously worked in the short term, but the money was spent just as quickly as it was raised. During the eighteenth century, the selling of *offices* became a major source of income for the king; however, the downside of this action was that it also played a part in creating a state which had a complicated, disorganized system of officials, and which was to create a type of chaos (albeit with at least some kind of internal order) which was the Ancien Régime:

> The Ancien Régime was not a planned order of things. It had grown up slowly and haphazardly, by custom and habit. Laws were customary, rights were prescriptive. Powers, prerogatives and privileges endlessly overlapped and conflicted.
>
> Doyle, 1990, p. 14.

The seventeenth century saw a rise in the number of officials and was a time of great prosperity for the *financiers*. Unfortunately, their

ever-increasing influence led to a great deal of despotism on their part: personal profit became their chief concern, and the amount of power they had meant they could very easily take advantage of their position. I shall come back to this point in the next section.

The term *financier* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is quite a general one, as the increase in the number of officials led to a number of different terms which did, in fact, come under the general heading of *financier*:

> Enfin, à toutes les époques, quand il s'agissait de percevoir des droits et taxes, de vendre du domaine, des offices, de procéder à des opérations qui devaient amener des rentrées d'argent, ou d'effectuer des travaux, le roi a trouvé commode de traiter avec des particuliers, au plus offrant et dernier enchérisseur dans un cas, au rabais et moins disant dans l'autre. Ces particuliers, individus ou société, sont les fermiers de diverses sortes, appelés dans le cas des impôts et emprunts les "partisans", les "traitants", ou plus généralement les "financiers", qui opéraient sous le contrôle et avec l'aide des officiers du roi et des commissaires royaux.
>
> Mousnier, 1980, p. 35.

In the seventeenth century in particular, the *financiers*, especially those known as *fermiers*, had a lot of power and control over the king's finances. By using these *financiers* as intermediaries to gain money from his people, the king was, therefore, not in the direct line of fire when there was cause for complaint (which was frequently the case.) The *financiers* made sure that taxes were paid on time, fines were paid and confiscations carried out where necessary. The *fermier* was normally permitted to keep half of all the fines etc. collected, not to mention the fact that they often collected more than was due, and pocketed the surplus money. The *financiers* had the support of the king's officers if need be: the king did not take any chances, as he realized that these *financiers*

provided him with a huge percentage of royal revenue. Most *fermiers* were able to govern their own areas of influence; they were even given the authority to arm their employees and imprison those whom they felt were not obeying their orders.

By the eighteenth century, therefore, the *fermiers* had established a huge range of influence. Louis XIV's reign was one of perpetual wars abroad and by the time of his death, the cost of this was phenomenal. He was by no means an unpopular king, but the peasants suffered under his reign due to the high taxation, which was of course enforced by the *financiers*. When Philippe, duc d'Orléans, was appointed as Regent (Louis XV being only five years old when he ascended to the throne), the atmosphere at Court changed totally. Where Louis XIV had been devout and austere – even in terms of what historians see as his self-worship – Philippe encouraged a sense of libertinism in his fellow courtiers. Money was seen as a means of pleasure and social advancement, and luxury became all-important. This in turn enhanced the role of the *financier*, on whom the rich depended for advances of money. Despite this outward show of wealth, however, the country was suffering as a whole and the debts which were incurred to sustain this life of luxury at the Court were enormous. France was in economic turmoil and the *financiers*, especially the *fermiers*, grew in number as a consequence. Note the figures provided by Mousnier:

> Les fermiers généraux exerçaient aussi une emprise sur la société par les places de commis dont ils disposaient. En 1774, selon Lavoisier, les fermes générales employaient 29 500 commis permanents et 5 à 6 000 'buralistes' contractuels temporaires, dont une armée de gardes qui aurait monté en 1784 à 23 000 hommes. Les commis recevaient une commission royale qui leur donnait

autorité. Les fermiers généraux prenaient à bail ces commis royaux et leur autorité.

Mousnier, 1980, p. 435.

The *commis* formed a certain hierarchy, divided into two main categories: the first main category was that of *préposé*, which was made up of *directeurs*, *contrôleurs* and *receveurs*, and those they employed. The second category, inferior in terms of the power those concerned exerted over people, were known collectively as the *commis simples*, who were the tax collectors and guards etc. The term *financier* seems to have covered both these categories at the time:

> L'ensemble des fermiers, traitants, partisans, prêteurs, donneurs d'avis formait ce que les contemporains appelaient les 'financiers'. Le financier est toute personne qui manie les deniers du roi. Il diffère du banquier qui pratique le commerce de l'argent avec les particuliers. Il arrivait que la même personne fût à la fois financier et banquier.
>
> Mousnier, 1980, p. 72.

Note the distinction made between *financier* and *banquier*, as this distinction became even clearer after the Revolution. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the profession of *financier* had disappeared, but the *banquiers* still existed. There was in fact a certain amount of conflict between the *banquiers* and the *financiers* in the eighteenth century: the *financiers* were determined to achieve a certain amount of social standing within this society and so tried to dispel the image of being money-lenders, a profession which was frowned upon by the Catholic church. The *banquiers*, on the other hand, were often members of the protestant community and were not in service to the monarchy. The *banquiers* were seen as

independent financial advisors, whereas the *financiers* were employees of the king.

The *financier*'s role in the eighteenth century was affected by the foundation of John Law's bank in May 1716. The tax farmers saw their influence begin to dwindle, as Law tried to establish a central state bank in order to manage and control state finances. The king's debts were to be handled by the bank and would become national debts. However, the bank's collapse in 1720 saw a return to the *ferme* system, and a re-establishment of the power and influence of the *financiers*.[4]

It was possible in the second half of the eighteenth century to embark on a career as a *préposé*. This is the career which Collé's young friend must have been following – the young man whom Collé wanted so much to succeed in life and the letters to whom are contained in his *Correspondance Inédite*. After their studies, these men would spend at least one year in the service of a *procureur* or in the offices of the *Hôtel des fermes* in Paris, after which they could be named as *contrôleurs généraux* in the provinces, or in the *bureaux de correspondances* in Paris. It is interesting that Collé had a very keen understanding of how things worked in the world of finance. He is constantly warning his young friend to guard his reputation and to win favour with his employees. All his good advice was certainly well-founded:

L'avancement se faisait sur notation. Les contrôleurs jugeaient et notaient les employés périodiquement, indiquaient leur grade, leurs appointements, leur âge, leur taille, leur lieu de naissance, la composition de leur famille, leur profession avant d'entrer dans les fermes, leur niveau d'instruction, leurs revenus,

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[4] A more detailed account of the Law's bank crisis is given in G.T. Matthews, *The Royal General Farms in Eighteenth-century France* (New York, Columbia University Press, !958), pp. 62-76.

leurs problèmes, leurs capacités... Les appointements pouvaient être attirants. En 1781, les directeurs provinciaux touchaient 12 à 15 000 livres par an. Ils étaient exempts d'impôts, sauf de capitation. Ils pouvaient fréquenter les hauts rangs de la société bourgeoise provinciale. Les contrôleurs généraux, les contrôleurs, les receveurs étaient aussi bien payés.

Mousnier, 1980, p. 436.

So really these *commis* – just like all the *financiers* – could be seen as a type of *fonctionnaire* in the second half of the eighteenth century. Such a career was certainly desirable, in terms of the amount of money you stood to make. The most powerful men were the *fermiers* who were able to recruit well-bred young men as *préposés*. In order to protect their own position, the *fermiers* needed the support of the protectors and patrons who in turn ensured the support of the king. This contact with such a large proportion of the population meant that the *financiers* had a great deal of power and influence.

In the eighteenth century, *surintendants* were also selected by the king, according to their relationship within the *monde des finances*. The *surintendant* would use his personal fortune to lend money to the king and guarantee the loans from the *financiers*. His main role was to inspire confidence and to maintain the flow of credit to the state by ensuring both reimbursement and high interest rates. He in turn used the services of a *premier commis* and several others; the *premier commis* in particular would inspire confidence in the *financiers* (basically by securing loans, offering help and guidance where needed etc.) and were not too zealous in enforcing any rules or regulations limiting the rights of the *financiers*. In other words, the *financiers* had few people to answer to. This fact, among many others, affected both their social and

financial status in the eighteenth century, and it is this that I would like to discuss in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

The *financiers* in the eighteenth century: their corruption and social pretensions.

Dictionary definitions do not give the full story behind the influence of the *financiers*: these men were rich, powerful and, more often than not, ruthless. The king's lack of money meant that they became a necessary evil; they did take full advantage of their position of power, but their services were very much needed:

> On flatte le financier quand on a besoin de lui, quand le Trésor du prince est aux abois. Le financier est, à ces moments, celui qui a "du crédit", plus de crédit que tout le monde; il avance immédiatement les sommes nécessaires; il se les procure auprès de ses amis et met sa fortune à contribution. Mais, en contrepartie, les intérêts qu'il réclame sont considérables et la frontière devient indécise entre les avances qu'il fait, sa cassette personnelle, et le Trésor. Il attire alors aisément l'envie et la dénonciation. On l'a loué comme sauveur de l'Etat. On peut aussi bien le condamner comme vampire des finances royales: les deux choses sont vraies, successivement et à la fois.
>
> Bouvier and Germain-Martin, 1964, pp. 11-12.

The French monarchy had to resort to these individuals when money was lacking; such dependence worked to the advantage of the *financiers*, who knew only too well that the king would choose to ignore a certain amount of lawlessness on their part, as long as the money kept coming in. As I mentioned previously, the *fermiers* were responsible for collecting the king's revenues: this they did do, but they also knew that only a stated amount was to be paid to the king, and any surplus amount was theirs, supposedly to cover

expenses, etc. Official receipts were issued by the treasury, but the names, addresses, and sometimes even the amount of money received were left blank. This of course meant that the *financier* could collect whatever amount he chose to and pocket the excess funds. Quite often the *financiers* would lend the money they made in this way to the king, which proves just how far they were able to exploit the system. Personal details of all the *fermiers* were supposed to be submitted to the *contrôleur général des finances*, but this rarely happened, and so it would be difficult to find these men if the king ever did want to prosecute them. Anyone employed by a *financier* was given a contract with a personal seal, but again no names appeared on the contract: they wanted to remain anonymous at all costs.

The unpopularity of the *financiers* amongst the poorer members of society seems to date from the seventeenth century, when the taxation system caused a great amount of unrest. This unpopularity continued into the eighteenth century, as the *financiers* were the king's official tax collectors as such, and they had more dealings with the general public. The taxation system widened the gap between rich and poor, as it was based on agricultural products, and the farmers were the ones who stood to pay. According to Niklaus, the peasant was fortunate if he could keep eighteen francs out of every hundred he earned (Niklaus, 1970, p. 18).

As late as the 1770s, noble and clerical tax exemptions were quite common: the divisions in society were still governed by those who did manual labour and those who did not. It was not the case, however, that nobles were *always* exempt from paying taxes. The unfairness of the system was obvious, as privilege was a main

determining factor as to whether someone had to pay taxes or not: very often it was the *financiers* who had the power to make the distinction:

> Fiscal exemption, the commonest form of privilege, could be acquired without particular difficulty by men of substance and even, in a partial way, by men of very little substance. On the other hand, the eighteenth-century noble always paid some taxes – more indeed than the wealthy bourgeois of certain towns favoured by a history of bargains with the Crown – while, in practice, rich commoners benefitted as much as nobles from the complaisance, deference or laxity of administrators and collectors of taxes.
>
> Lucas, in Johnson, 1970, p. 93.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the *financiers* had gained a higher social status and sense of respectability; their job is more secure and acceptable in the eyes of others. They could be seen as constituting a third division of the nobility, alongside *la robe* and *l'épée*. According to Louis-Sébastien Mercier, however, the *financiers* formed a class of their own in this society:

> Il y a dans Paris huit classes d'habitans bien distinctes; les princes et les grands seigneurs (c'est la moins nombreuse), les gens de robe, les financiers, les négocians ou marchands, les artistes, les artisans, les manœuvriers, les laquais et le bon peuple.
>
> Mercier, 1990 [1781], p. 275.

There are even separate ranks within the class of *financier*:

> Les financiers se subdivisent depuis le fermier général jusqu'au prêteur à la petite semaine. Les agens de change, ces nouveaux crocodiles, occupent le milieu de ce corps dévorant, méprisable, et bientôt méprisé; car ses excès vont en croissant.
>
> Ibid, p. 276.

Note the tone when Mercier talks about the *financiers* – it seems obvious that the majority of them (if not all) must have been

disliked. Anyone who had any dealings with business in Paris – no matter what their income was – seems to have had a low social status. However, times are changing. The *financiers* were eager to achieve a higher social status and indeed tried everything within their power to achieve some mark of nobility. The old aristocracy may have resented their wealth, but their money, along with their position as servants to the king, did grant them some form of status, and they would be considered slightly higher on the social scale than merchants for example. The hereditary noble was considered superior, but *financiers* such as Collé's Gasparin are now on the threshold of the élite. Money could buy everything, including titles, and the old values of virtue and *noblesse de race* were no longer the only means of social promotion. Noble birth no longer signified wealth, and the *financiers* were beginning to be recognized as intelligent, determined men:

> [Les richesses] sont maintenant les signes de réussite des hommes d'affaires, des financiers, des commerçants, la récompense non de la naissance, mais de l'esprit d'entreprise et de l'intelligence appliquée à des œuvres lucratives [...] . Les richesses sont donc des récompenses méritées. Loin d'éloigner la vertu, elles ne peuvent que l'accompagner [...] . Pour Nolivos Saint-Cyr, qui publie en 1759 son Tableau du siècle, les financiers jadis méprisés pour leur dureté, leur hauteur et leur avarice, sont maintenant honorés parce que l'intérêt est devenu un dieu et que le désir de l'aisance et du bien-être l'emporte sur l'honneur.
>
> Durand, 1971, pp. 188-189.

According to Niklaus, the rise of the *financier* in the eighteenth century was a peculiar social phenomenon which left the *financier* in a very precarious situation:

> Perhaps the most peculiar social change at that date was the rise of the *financier*, also called *commis, agent de change, sous-fermier,*

fermier, traitant, partisan and *maltôtier*. These were in fact tax-collectors, and went back to the time of Colbert who, in 1681, had established a *Compagnie de quarante financiers*, required collectively to pay the government 670,000 livres per annum, but entitled to recoup themselves by levying customs, *traites, aides* (on drink), and *gabelle* (on salt). The lease or *traite* (hence the word *traitant*) to collect certain taxes in specified areas was ceded for six years to a *financier* embodied by Lesage in *Turcaret*, who received 4,000 livres per annum for his services. A whole world of *directeurs, inspecteurs, contrôleurs, ambulants, vérificateurs*, and *commis buralistes* gravitated around them, exempt from paying taxes and hoping for preferment to the nobility. Around them flocked *agioteurs*, or speculators, and usurers. All these men were disliked by the nobility, for they amassed enormous fortunes as the aristocracy were losing them. Some set themselves up as patrons of the arts, as did Crozat, who helped Watteau, and others later became publishers, who favoured the *philosophes*. The peasants, like the aristocrats, hated them and generally held them to be responsible for the bad state of the country.

Niklaus, 1970, pp. 85-86.

This conclusion is simplistic in my view: if all one considers are plays such as Lesage's *Turcaret*, then perhaps it could be said that the *financiers* were seen as the villains of this society. However, there is evidence to suggest that after a long struggle, the *financiers* were managing to reach a certain social footing. Lucas states this quite clearly:

> The quickest passport to social pre-eminence was the acquisition of great wealth. The banker, the slave-trader, the wealthy planter, the financier, these men had no difficulty in entering the nobility. They could afford the cost of an office such as *secrétaire du roi*, which directly conferred hereditary nobility and which could be held jointly with other offices. They could purchase fiefs and privileges liberally. Their wealth made them attractive to the Crown and made their daughters attractive to established noble families.

Lucas, in Johnson, 1976, p. 115.

The *financiers* in the eighteenth century were fully aware of the importance of marrying into the right family in order to further the slow and very delicate process of social ascension. It was not uncommon in the eighteenth century for *financiers* to refuse to let their daughters marry someone of noble birth, simply because they were not rich enough. Durand (1992) quotes the example of Jean-Baptiste Bouilhac, a *fermier général* from 1757 to 1780. His oldest daughter, Philippe, physically deformed and living in a convent, was proposed to by Léonard de Chancel de Châteauroux, a bodyguard to the king and of noble birth. The *fermier* refused to let the marriage take place, knowing full well that the suitor was only interested in the family's money, and would only have agreed to the marriage had the suitor been just as wealthy. This is a further illustration of the power of money in this society: what the *noblesse* were losing in terms of reputation and wealth, the *familles de finance* were gaining. The *financiers* of the eighteenth century did have a clear desire to move upwards socially, and cases such as that of Bouilhac were not all that common. The *financiers* wanted their sons to receive a good education and their daughters to marry into the nobility whenever possible. Marriage between the *financiers*' family and the nobility meant that the *financiers* were gradually infiltrating the world of the upper classes, a fact greatly lamented by the Prince de Montbarey:

Les affiliés de la secte philosophique, commensaux de la plupart des maisons des financiers, après avoir fait adopter leurs principes aux filles de ces richards, mariées ensuite dans les plus grandes maisons du royaume, étaient aisément parvenus aux instituteurs de leurs enfans; et, de cette chaîne de conséquences

était résulté le changement presque total de la façon de penser de la jeune noblesse, qui traitait de pédanterie, de faux orgueil et de morgue ridicule l'attachement que quelques hommes sages avaient conservé pour la distinction qui, jusqu'alors, avaient marqué tous les rangs à la cour.

In Durand, 1992, p. 256.

Like it or not, though, the *financiers* could definitely rival the *noblesse* in terms of their living standards, and in many cases better them, as the nobles were gradually losing their wealth. A *financier* who did not have a mistress in the eighteenth century was apparently a very rare case, as it was the 'fashion', so to speak, to be seen as having a mistress. Actresses from the Opéra were very often under the protection of members of the nobility, and so the *financiers* are in fact assuming a role which was normally associated with the highest orders. Entertaining such mistresses also means that the *financiers* were frequenting the same gatherings as the nobility, joining them for supper after the theatre.

A further example of the *financiers'* luxurious lifestyle can again be found in Durand, in an extract from *Les Pseudo-Mémoires de Madame d'Epinay*, entitled *La Journée d'un financier frivole* (undated). It is written from the point of view of a *financier*'s mistress, who describes a typical day in the life of her lover. Work is hardly mentioned and the *financier* seems to spend his day preening himself and receiving guests. The tone is very tongue-in-cheek; the lady is supposedly of noble birth, and yet the *financier* is worried that she will not be able to organize a dinner party for him in case she has neither the delicacy nor the imagination suitable for the job. He even takes on the role of patron of the arts, a role normally assumed by members of the *noblesse*:

> Ensuite, c'est un polisson qui vient brailler un air et à qui on accorde sa protection pour le faire entrer à l'Opéra, après lui avoir donné quelques leçons de bon goût et lui avoir appris ce que c'est que la propreté du chant français.
>
> Durand, 1992, p. 181.

Of course, one cannot assume that all the *financiers* were like this: in *Les Fermiers généraux...*, Durand points out that there were some *financiers* who carried out their duties faithfully and others, the *financiers frivoles*, who were only interested in living a life of luxury. The authors of literary texts are also prone to bias according to their contact with the *financiers*. *La Journée d'un financier frivole* may be written with a certain amount of sarcasm, but the fact remains that the *financier* had a lot of say in what went on in society in general. Through perseverance, the *financier* could achieve his aims:

> Provided that such a family was of some wealth, conformed to the standards of noble behaviour and married advantageously, it was sufficient for its members to claim indefatigably enough and for long enough a customary privileged position in order to obtain ultimately the Intendant's tacit acquiescence to their inclusion in some list of privileged persons, thus achieving irrefutable evidence of privileged status.
>
> Lucas, in Johnson, 1976, p. 95.

Some bourgeois families went so far as to adopt a noble name, calling themselves marquis or adding 'de' to their surname. Despite the immediate ridicule that such a step might cause, the family name would finally be accepted as normal in perhaps the second or third generation. There was a distinction between those who would have been of pure noble race, and those who were *anoblis*: the *financiers* were powerful men, but never could quite penetrate the snobbery of the *nobles de race*. The *financiers* could not win: they

were disliked by both nobles and non-nobles when successful in their quest for prestige:

> It seems that, in the conditions of the eighteenth century, it is far less important to calculate how many people penetrated into the nobility than to see how they did it. The fact that the *anoblis*, to whom one would have expected the non-noble members of the élite to have been attached as symbols of what they themselves could achieve, were on the contrary widely disliked is perhaps evidence more of this situation than of the proverbial arrogance of the *parvenu*. The mistrust of the capitalist financier displayed so markedly by the revolutionary assemblies may well have been the product of the experiences of the majority of their members with their provincial town backgrounds.
>
> Ibid., pp. 117-118.

During the Revolution, the *financiers* found themselves without allies: they became as vulnerable as the Ancien Régime itself. They represented a very powerful element of society in terms of how the king's finances were governed, but they also represented a system which had become unfair in the eyes of many. An interesting point is that many of the *financiers* ended up on the guillotine, whereas the *banquiers* were able to take advantage of the disorder and chaos during the Revolution and build up a successful career. One cannot assume, however, that the *financiers* were classed as the villains of the Ancien Régime. Figures provided by Durand show that out of 223 *fermiers* for example, 32 died at the guillotine during the Revolution, which is 14.3%. If they were to be dismissed as one of the major causes of poverty and hardship under the king's rule, then surely more of them would have been executed at the time. People were more discontented with the unfair system, than with those who had the task of administering it.

Considering the fact that the king depended so much on the *financiers* for financial security, one would assume that they would gain a lot of support from him, but this was in fact not always the case. The *financiers* were only given support because they were needed; the king and his ministers were not happy with their dependence on these men. In the second half of the reign of Louis XV and then under Louis XVI, the king's ministers did try to reduce the power of the *fermiers* and proposals were made to replace the old tax system. However, such was the disorder of the old system that this proved to be a virtually impossible task: the *financiers* had dug their heels in and it was really only the Revolution which saw their downfall.

Their relationship with the king did, however, benefit the *financiers* up to a certain point. Anyone in service to the king was guaranteed a fairly high social status immediately and this was in fact a means of achieving the attribute of virtue which was essential in one's quest for *noblesse*. During the reign of Louis XV, there are examples of how some of the *financiers* found favour with the king. Take for example Etienne Bouret, known as 'Le Grand Bouret'. He had the *pavillon du Roi* built near the forest of Sénart so that the king could stay there as his guest during hunting trips. The king was also present at the marriage of Bouret's brother to Madeleine Poisson de Malvoisin, cousin of the Marquise de Pompadour. The huge influence which Mme de Pompadour had over the king for many years could also be seen as an indication of the *financiers*' growing status and political power. Several members of her family were *financiers* of some kind, and she had many friends and allies amongst the financial community. In return for their support, she

made sure that the *financiers* were also protected, a fact commented upon by Collé in his diary:

> Tout ne se donnoit pas: la plupart des choses se vendoient ou s'achetoient; d'où il suit nécessairement qu'il s'est répandu dans tous les états une âpreté et une avidité effroyables pour l'argent, et que l'argent paroît seul aujourd'hui donner de la considération. Elle (Madame de Pompadour) a même rendu toute la cour financière: 'les gens de la plus grande qualité n'ont point dédaigné, n'ont pas regardé comme une bassesse d'avoir des intérêts dans les affaires et des croupes dans les fermes générales. A cet égard et à beaucoup d'autres, elle a porté le dernier coup aux mœurs; elle en a porté à l'autorité du Roi...'
>
> Collé, *Journal* 2, pp. 348-349.

As representatives of the king, the *financiers* were therefore respectable members of society – theoretically of course. As Collé has suggested here, there was still some opposition to their joining high society, as the world of finance was still not considered a noble profession. The *financiers*, however, saw their chance to infiltrate the nobility and gradually gain at least some form of acceptance. Should they be dismissed as bourgeois parasites? Parasites they may well have been, but they fed off the greed of the king and the snobbery involving the system of *noblesse* in France. They benefitted from the *liberté de mœurs* during the Regency and the country's greed for luxury and wealth, triumphing finally in Mme de Pompadour's influence over Louis XV. In hindsight, the *financiers* were simply a product of their time: the question is whether I can judge the reception of Collé's *financier* by his audiences in the eighteenth century.

The *financier* in literature: Dancourt and Lesage.

The importance of the role which the *financier* played in French society is reflected in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The theatre provided a forum for a society which was self-analytical: the stage acted as a mirror of social issues, the extent of which varies according to the viewpoint of different authors. In order to gain insight into Collé's portrayal of the *financier*, I think it is useful to make a comparison with other playwrights. Collé's audience may have been predisposed to think about the *financiers* in a certain way, due to their portrayal by well-known authors. The two most prominent plays featuring *financiers* are Dancourt's *Le Chevalier à la mode* and Lesage's *Turcaret*. There are several reasons why I have chosen to look at these plays in paricular. Firstly, the portrayal of the *monde des finances* in both plays satirizes the corruption of the *financiers* as outlined above. In *Le Galant escroc*, the comte claims that Gasparin is one of the '*financiers épais, tels qu'ils étaient autrefois*' (Scene 5), and so it is interesting to see whether Collé's portrayal is as harsh, or whether Gasparin has any redeeming features. Both plays were also still being performed at the Comédie-française; in 1753 for example *Le Chevalier à la mode* was performed twice, and *Turcaret* three times[5] (see Joannidès, 1971). Portraying Gasparin as a *financier* may, therefore, have made the audience associate *Le Galant escroc* in some way with the plays of Dancourt and Lesage.

Florent Carton Dancourt (1661-1725) could be considered as the successor to Molière in the Comédie-française and as a precursor to Lesage. He wrote more than sixty plays altogether, all

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[5] Many of Dancourt's plays were put on that year, the performances including *Les Bourgeoises à la mode* (4), *Colin-Maillard* (7), *Les Fées*(2), *La Fête du village* (2), *Le Galant jardinier* (2), *Le Mari retrouvé* (9), *Le Moulin de Javelle* (14), *Les Trois cousines* (10), *Les Vacances* (3) and *Les Vendanges de Suresnes* (7). Lesage's *Crispin rival de son maître* also had 4 performances.

of which could be said to be rather superficial, depicting the world of the bourgeoisie and the *demi-monde*, without what appears to be any great social comment behind his writing. He could be seen as a writer of comedies which became known in that period as *comédies de mauvaises mœurs*: even at the turn of the eighteenth century, it was obvious that the aristocrats were gradually losing their wealth, whilst *financiers* and tricksters of all sorts were gaining the upper hand.

Le Chevalier à la mode was written in 1687 and is a prime example of how Dancourt drew on the traits of those he saw around him in society:

> Tout le personnel des bourgeoises entichées de noblesse et des petites vertus, des parasites, des effrontés, des joueurs, des usuriers, des agioteurs, est vivant dans son théâtre.
>
> Parigot, 1907, p. 307.

This play does not feature a *financier*, but the widow of a *financier* instead, who is desperate to become a *femme de qualité*, even if that means living in poverty:

> **MME PATIN**: Oui, oui, j'aimerais mieux être la marquise la plus endettée de toute la cour, que de demeurer veuve du plus riche financier de France.
>
> Parigot, 1907, p.312.

She is seriously considering marrying a chevalier who has no money, but whose name is enough to make her consider him a good match. The chevalier concerned is a typical comic rogue who has three mistresses, giving them all the same verses and managing to talk his way out of the situation when he is in danger of being caught by Mme Patin, the widow. As I mentioned before, the plot is very superficial, but this play is an interesting period piece.

Dancourt makes some very pointed comments about the *financier*'s acquisition of wealth; note the sarcasm from Mme Patin's servant as her mistress raves about how she has just been treated like a *femme bourgeoise* by a marquise passing her in the street:

LISETTE: Comment donc, madame, manquer de respect à une dame comme vous? Madame Patin, la veuve d'un honnête partisan, qui a gagné deux millions de bien au service du roi? Et qui sont ces insolents-là, s'il vous plaît?

Parigot, 1907, p. 310.

Dancourt makes fun of Mme Patin's obsession with climbing the social ladder: her language reveals that she must have received some form of education (i.e. she certainly does not belong to the lower orders), but her stupidity lies in the fact that she is prepared to accept the chevalier's excuses, even though she is fairly certain that he only wants her for her money. Another interesting point which comes from this quotation is that Dancourt specifies that she is the widow of a *partisan*:according to the Littré this term, along with *traitant* (the *financier* from *Turcaret*) and *maltôtier*, had pejorative connotations in the eighteenth century, unlike *financier* which was a much more general term for *hommes de finance*. Dancourt is presenting a stereotypical image of the morally dubious *financier* – a modified version of the *financiers* at that time which the theatre-going public seemed to accept. The play does not have a bitter, cynical tone: it is more a comedy based on the ridiculous vanity and pretensions of the widow, as well of the deviousness of those willing to take advantage of her pretensions. The first scene, in which Mme Patin is insulted in her carriage by a passing marquise, is reputed to have actually taken place; Dancourt is an observer of society rather than a bitter satirist. He was

obviously aware of the corruption and greed within the *monde des finances*, but pokes fun at it in a fairly light-hearted fashion by depicting the ridiculous notions of a widow of a *financier*, rather than painting the manners of a *financier* in all his glory. Lesage, however, pushes the bad image of the *financier* to its furthest extreme.

Alain-René Lesage (1668-1747) started off his career as a clerk to a *financier*, so one can assume that he had inside knowledge of what the profession was all about. *Turcaret* dates from 1709; although it was written some fifty years earlier than *Le Galant escroc*, I think it provides a very important basis for an analysis of Collé's play, as it is a depiction of the *financier* of the old school, so to speak. The *financier* is very much the central character, reflected of course in the actual title (when it first appeared, it was known as *Turcaret, ou le financier*), as opposed to the cunning plan of the comte which is the main interest in *Le Galant escroc*. *Turcaret* caused a major upset amongst the *financiers* at the time – they were reputed to have offered Lesage 100,000 livres to withdraw his play from the Comédie-française, and finally used their influence with the king, (dependent on their money), and the actresses of the Comédie-française to have the play removed after only seven performances. The reason behind this is obvious: *Turcaret* satirizes and ridicules the *financiers*, and they took it as a very serious personal insult. Lesage has nothing at all to say in Turcaret's defence:

> L'homme est rejeté sans appel: il ne possède pas ce qui est indispensable dans la société pour y tenir bonne place, un nom et de l'esprit signifiés à tous par ses manières. Le financier est ainsi fixé pour la littérature de la première moitié du siècle sous les traits de Turcaret.
>
> Durand, 1992, p. 403.

Turcaret is portrayed as a semi-fraudulent businessman, whose honest and dishonest dealings are so closely intertwined that it is difficult to tell them apart. The *financier*'s business is revealed a lot more in *Turcaret* than in *Le Galant escroc*; we are given a lot more details of what Turcaret gets up to. For example, Turcaret even mentions the *société* of *financiers* and his influence within the group:

M. TURCARET: [...] Je vais à une de nos assemblées, pour m'opposer à la réception d'un pied-plat, d'un homme de rien, qu'on veut faire entrer dans notre compagnie.

Lesage, 1969 [1709], p. 40.

Other details about Turcaret's job and power include the fact that he can obtain official posts for anyone he wants, including his former *laquais* whom la Baronne simply wants to get rid of. Perhaps the biggest revelations of his dishonest business deals comes in Act 1, Scene 7, as he discusses money matters with M. Rafle, the money-lender. It was well known that the *financiers* had many men in their employ, although they were careful to dissociate themselves from anyone with a dubious reputation. Lesage exploits this fact by making Turcaret out to be a deceitful, cunning schemer who tries to talk his way out of admitting his business relationship with M. Rafle. His snobbish attitude towards social standing is also revealed in this play, through his treatment of his wife and sister. His wife is simply a *femme de province*, and he feels it is much easier to keep her hidden away in the country while he entertains several mistresses in Paris. His sister is a *revendeuse de toilette*, which embarrasses Turcaret, who has obvious pretensions about belonging to the nobility now that his personal fortune has grown. He denies his humble beginnings as a *laquais* (Act 1, Scene 4), and boasts instead about the magnificent house he is practically building in Paris (Act

3, Scene 3), giving exact details of the size and cost and so on. All of this suggests that Turcaret is nothing but a mere caricature: Lesage has taken all the scandalous details on the shady business dealings of the *financier* at the start of the eighteenth century, and incorporated them into the actions of one exaggerated character. Turcaret is made to appear ridiculous: look for example at the poem he has written for the Baronne:

Recevez ce billet, charmante Philis,
Et soyez assurée que mon âme
Conservera toujours une éternelle flamme,
Comme il est certain que trois et trois font six.

Lesage, 1969 [1709], p. 37.

Marine and the Baronne make fun of him, mocking his lack of delicacy:

LA BARONNE: Rien n'est tel que la maison d'un homme d'affaires pour perfectionner le goût.

Lesage, 1969 [1709], p. 38.

Turcaret is a buffoon and also a trickster: the fact that he fails to tell his mistress about his wife proves that he is only out for what he can get in life. There is no sympathy for Turcaret in the play, and even when the Baronne appears to be hesitating as to whether to get her own back, one quip from Lisette is enough to put things into perspective again:

LISETTE: [...] Il vaut mieux sentir quelque jour des remords pour avoir ruiné un homme d'affaires, que le regret d'en avoir manqué l'occasion.

Lesage, 1969 [1709], p. 86.

According to Niklaus, Lesage has no sympathy for any of his characters:

[...] Lesage extends sympathy to none of them. His cold detachment, his quick wit, and his feeling for sharp repartees and well-timed ripostes, coupled with unfailing ability to construct a scene, would have sufficed to establish his claim to distinction among French dramatists. It is, however, his satire of the world of finance and money, and his presentation of a vast and corrupt society unredeemed by a single example of a good man, which have won him a special place in the history of the theatre [...]. *Turcaret*, although now judged more comic than has hitherto been thought, does nevertheless serve as a pointer to the *drames* of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and contains many biting remarks that are worthy of Voltaire's pen in their sophisticated wit.

Niklaus, 1970, p. 87.

I agree totally, as the whole tone of the play is summed up by Frontin with the following comment:

FRONTIN: J'admire le train de la vie humaine! Nous plumons une coquette; la coquette mange un homme d'affaires; l'homme d'affaires en pille d'autres; cela fait un richochet de fourberies le plus plaisant du monde.

Lesage, 1969 [1709], p. 45.

The characters in *Turcaret* are stereotypical in the sense of comic farce. Turcaret is meant to be ridiculous, and the other characters are scheming: although both *Turcaret* and *Le Galant escroc* have some degree of cynicism, it is Lesage who appears the more bitter and satirical.

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE CHARACTERS IN *LE GALANT ESCROC*.

In this final section, I intend to group together the earlier observations about the social status of eighteenth-century French society as they apply directly to the characters of *Le Galant escroc*. The characters may be divided into two groups: the impoverished

nobility, as represented by the chevalier and the comte, and the Gasparin family, whose wealth and social prestige are a direct result of the fact that M. Gasparin is a *financier*. There is a certain tension between the two sides which an eighteenth-century audience would have been aware of. I shall also be comparing the portrayal of some of the characters to those which appear in *Turcaret* and *Le Chevalier à la mode*.

The comte.

In terms of social prestige, the comte seems to have the most privileged position in the play. The comte is a *noble de race;* and although no precise details are given, there is a suggestion in the play that he falls into the category of those nobles in the eighteenth century whose fortune was dwindling due to their extravagant lifestyle. In the first scene, he is taken aback by Madame Gasparin's request for such a large sum of money; the suggestion is that he does not have such a large amount of money at his disposal, unlike Gasparin, who was about to use the same amount of money with which to play cards. The clearest sign that the comte sees the *financier* as being the usurper of the traditional role of the nobles comes in Scene 3, where the comte laments the fact that Gasparin had more money with which to tempt the 'petite souris de l'Opéra', in whom he was interested:

LE COMTE: En vérité, si ces gens de finance continuent, l'on ne pourra bientôt plus avoir de filles; et c'est aussi là la cause qui l'empêche de donner de l'argent à sa femme, et ce qui fait que sa femme m'en demande...

Scene 3.

The comte knows that Gasparin is a rich and powerful man, but there are also several comments in the play which prove that he sees the *financier* as inferior in some way. The following is one such example:

LE COMTE, *seul*: Ma foi, je crois mon idée heureuse. Elle établira mon petit chevalier, en jouant un tour excellent à la charmante Gasparin, que j'aurai moyennant cela. Et par là, d'ailleurs, je me vengerai de ce petit publicain, qui, à force d'argent, vient de m'enlever la petite souris de l'Opéra.

Scene 3.

The expression 'ce petit publicain' sums up the comte's attitude to Gasparin: he accepts him socially because of his wealth, and knows, therefore, that he is a good ally to have. In *Robe and Sword*, Ford provides details of the royal declaration of 8 January 1695, which divided the French population into 22 classes, according to their wealth and ability to pay taxes. Ford admits that the categories are somewhat crude, but the scale does provide at least some indication of the various sections of the nobility. The comte is much further down the scale than the *financier*:

> Class 1, each member of which was assessed 2,000 livres, was reserved to the Dauphin, other princes and princesses of the blood royal, ministers and tax farmers general – an interesting combination of monster fortunes. [...] Not until Class 7 (250 livres), that is to say, below practically all the magistrates of presidential rank in the entire kingdom, does there appear a solid grouping of non-robe nobles: all the marquises, counts, viscounts and barons not otherwise classified.
>
> Ford, 1968, pp. 32-33.

Although Collé's portrayal of the *financier* dates some fifty years after this royal declaration, the classification here would account for the difference in fortune between the comte and Gasparin. As

mentioned above, the *financiers*' influence and financial security increased in the first half of the eighteenth century, whilst the nobles saw their fortunes dwindle. The divide between them, therefore, could only get greater in financial terms.

However, the fact remains that the comte does not see Gasparin as a social equal in terms of his family background; unlike the comte, Gasparin is not of noble birth. The comte's social prestige does not lie in his wealth, but in his title: one of the arguments put forward for the chevalier's being able to marry Sophie is the fact that he is related to the comte, and therefore this is proof of his noble origins.

The chevalier.

We are also given very few details about the chevalier's family background, other than the fact that he is related in some way to the comte. The title of chevalier has not come from a religious order which he belongs to; he has started a career in the army, holds the title of *capitaine de cavalerie*, and the comte mentions that it will not be long before the chevalier is given his own regiment (Scene 12). It seems likely that the chevalier is the second or third son of a nobleman: he does not stand to inherit any money, which was the usual case for someone in this position. The eighteenth century saw a multitude of nobles marrying the daughters (or, in the chevalier's case, the niece) of *financiers*, simply to get their dowry:

Mais la finance est alliée aujourd'hui à la noblesse et voilà ce qui fait la base de la force réelle. La dot de presque toutes les épouses des seigneurs est sortie de la caisse des fermes. Il est assez plaisant de voir un comte ou un vicomte, qui n'a qu'un beau nom, rechercher la fille opulente d'un financier; et le financier qui regorge

de richesses, aller demander la fille de qualité, nue, mais qui tient à une illustre famille.

Mercier, 1990 [1781], p. 96.

The only reason that he might possibly be a suitable match for Sophie is the fact that he does have a title; otherwise, he would have no hope of gaining permission from the Gasparins to marry her. The chevalier is not portrayed in the play as simply being a money-grabbing noble, eager to marry Sophie for her money. The comte makes fun of the chevalier's feelings towards Sophie in Scene 2, describing his young friend as 'amoureux comme un roman'. However, Mme Gasparin's objections to the chevalier remind us throughout the play that the chevalier is going to benefit financially from this marriage, even if this is not his first concern.

M. Gasparin, the *financier*.

The fact that *financier* was such a general term in the eighteenth century makes it difficult to know what Gasparin's job entails exactly. Collé does not specify Gasparin's profession as a *traitant* or a *fermier*: the suggestion here is that Gasparin makes his money by various means and is not just a money-lender or a tax-collector. It is probable that he had some sort of connection with the *fermes*; he may have started out as a *fermier* in the Provinces and then moved to Paris having made his fortune and gained promotion. It is highly unlikely that Gasparin is in the same position as Collé's young friend, the letters to whom appear in the *Correspondance littéraire*. Gasparin is older and seems settled in his career: there is no suggestion that he is still under training in the *bureaux de correspondances* in Paris, for example. He is likely to have moved quite a bit up the social scale, and earns a good deal of money. He

lives in Paris which, according to Mousnier, was a clear sign of wealth and prestige in comparison to those *financiers* who worked in the provinces. Gasparin must be successful at what he does, as he moves in the same social circle as members of the true nobility.

Gasparin fits into the image of the *financier* as the corrupt tax-collector. As mentioned on p. 73, the *financiers* were not required to provide receipts which stated accurately the amount of money they had collected. This is the point which Collé is making when Gasparin mentions in Scene 4 that he happens to have some extra money:

GASPARIN, *lui donnant l'argent*: Ah, parbleu, plutôt que de vous laisser aller à l'usurier, tenez, voilà les deux cents louis que je viens de recevoir d'une répartition, et que j'avais mis dans ma bourse de jeu.

Scene 4.

Gasparin quite openly declares his dishonest dealings; he is not seen in the play as trying to hide his wrongdoings, unlike the Turcaret of Lesage's play, who fits the image of the morally dubious *financier* wanting to remain anonymous. When M. Rafle arrives at the Baronne's house in *Turcaret*, the *financier* is very careful to distance himself from any association with a well-known money-lender, thus covering his tracks. In *Le Galant escroc*, we are given very few details about Gasparin's job; he is much more concerned about setting up a meeting with his latest mistress. This lack of detail is quite telling – there are quite a few jokes made at the expense of the *financier*, for example the comment made by the comte in the first scene:

LE COMTE: [...] Deux cents louis! A qui les emprunter?... Parbleu, ma chère dame, vous me traitez comme un financier, et je ne suis qu'un homme de qualité.

Scene 1.

This remark is pointed, but does not have the same cynical undertones as the remarks made about the *financiers* in *Turcaret*. Lesage makes it totally obvious that Turcaret is dishonest; Collé's remarks are much more like innuendo: little asides, rather than accusations. M. Gasparin is a bit slow on the uptake, given that he does not realize what his wife has been getting up to behind his back. His language is of a slightly less elevated tone then the comte's, which is perhaps indicative of his bourgeois origins. However, he is not as pompous as Turcaret is made out to be – he is perfectly content in his ignorance.

The unpopularity of the *financiers* in the eighteenth century may have generated a certain amount of animosity against characters such as Gasparin: the audience will be predisposed to seeing him as an official who operates an unfair system. The animosity would really come from two quarters: the peasants, and the nobility. Certainly, when Collé was writing *Le Galant escroc*, there was a huge difference between the outward, extravagant wealth of the court, and the poverty suffered by the peasants. The question is whether the peasants saw the *financier* as the guilty party, as he is the main beneficiary of the whole situation. If this is the case, then it sheds a completely different light on the portrayal of the *financier* in *Le Galant escroc*: are we supposed to see him as a villain, hated and feared by all? Is he ridiculous in Collé's eyes, exaggerated to the point of caricature? Collé does portray Gasparin as one of the *financiers* who *used* to exist; however, Gasparin is not

portrayed in the same way as the *financier* in *Turcaret*. His character is more refined, less pretentious. Collé must have been aware of the fact that the status of the *financier* in the second half of the eighteenth century had changed from the money-grabbing image as conveyed by Lesage and Dancourt. Duclos makes an interesting point in *Les Confessions du comte de* *** (1742), which is included in Durand's *La Société française au XVIIIe siècle...*, under the title, *Les Financiers ne sont plus ce qu'ils étaient*:

> Il y a eu un temps où un homme de quelque espèce qu'il fût, se jetait dans les affaires avec une ferme résolution d'y faire fortune, sans avoir d'autres dispositions qu'un fonds de cupidité et d'avarice; nulle délicatesse sur la bassesse des premiers emplois, le cœur dégagé de tous scrupules sur les moyens, et inaccessible aux remords après le succès. Avec ces qualités on ne manquait pas de réussir. Le nouveau riche, en conservant ses premières mœurs, y ajoutait un orgueil féroce dont ses trésoriers étaient la mesure; il était humble, ou insolent suivant ses pertes ou ses gains, et son mérite était à ses propres yeux, comme l'argent dont il était idolâtre, sujet à l'augmentation et au décri.
>
> Les financiers de ce temps-là étaient peu communicatifs; la défiance leur rendait tous les hommes suspects, et la haine publique mettait encore une barrière entre eux et la société.
>
> Duclos, in Durand, 1992, p. 203.

Duclos goes on to say that by the second half of the eighteenth century, things had changed considerably, and the *financiers* had become more cultivated as a result of their education and experience. Jokes are still made about them in literature, but note the following:

> Le préjugé n'est plus le même à l'égard des financiers; on en fait encore des plaisanteries d'habitude, mais ce ne sont plus de ces traits qui partaient autrefois de l'indignation que les traités et les affaires odieuses répandaient sur toute la finance.

Ibid., pp. 203-204.

Collé is not a revolutionary: he painted society as he saw it, borrowing some of the typical traits of the *financier* as society saw him and simply turning it into a piece of entertainment.

M. Gasparin is presented as being a rival to the *noblesse* in terms of social influence. As well as winning the affections of the *petite souris de l'Opéra*, he is also the one who is in the position of lending money to the comte, not the other way round. Gasparin, however, has no real pretensions as far as belonging to the *noblesse de race* is concerned. He does lead an extravagant lifestyle, but Collé does not portray him as a man desperate to achieve a title; Gasparin does not go under an assumed name, unlike some of the members of the bourgeoisie who were ridiculed for their social pretensions. The social status of Gasparin is difficult to pinpoint exactly; should he be seen as an accepted member of the nobility? Although the comte makes some pointed comments about the *financiers*, it cannot be denied that Gasparin – at least on the surface – occupies the same social status, and his lifestyle (mistresses, fine dinners etc.) mirrors that of the *noblesse*.

Sophie.

Sophie, as the niece of a rich *financier*, represents financial prosperity for whichever man she chooses to marry. It is clear from *Le Galant escroc* that the Gasparins are well established financially and socially – the fact that Sophie comes from a rich family means that she is in the position to refuse to marry a chevalier, even though he is, theoretically at least, of a higher social rank. The

chevalier is determined to marry Sophie; there is no suggestion from the comte for example that the chevalier is marrying beneath him. The one objection actually comes from Mme Gasparin, who does not see the chevalier as a rich enough catch for her niece.

Sophie is not portrayed as a young woman desperate to marry someone with a title, unlike the Mme Patin of *Le Chevalier à la mode*; on the contrary, Scene 8 suggests that Sophie's only reason for marrying the chevalier is the fact that she loves him. Nor is she portrayed as being intellectually inferior to the chevalier, or less aware of social graces; her admission in Scene 8 is extremely frank, and perhaps would not be the normal outburst of a lady of the *haute noblesse*. Nevertheless, Sophie's reasoning is eloquent and carefully worded; she is not being classed as the ignorant *femme bourgeoise* trying, and failing, to play the part of a lady.

Mme Gasparin.

Some insight is gained into the character of Mme Gasparin by making a comparison between her and the Mme Patin of *Le Chevalier à la mode*. Mme Gasparin is concerned about finding a suitable husband for her niece, but it is the chevalier's lack of money, rather than his social standing, which makes her hesitate. This is revealing of the fact that the *financiers* had in fact climbed up the social ladder by the 1750s: Mme Gasparin is not obsessed with titles, in the same way as Mme Patin. It is an advantage for her niece to marry someone with a title, but it does not seem to be a necessity. The two characters are of course deceived by their lovers – Mme Patin by her chevalier and Mme Gasparin by the comte. However, it is Mme Patin's ambition which leads to her downfall, whereas Mme Gasparin is only interested in covering her gambling

debts, and is quite prepared to take advantage of the comte's attraction towards her in order to get what she wants. They are both victims up to a certain point, but Mme Patin is a less well-rounded character, rather more along the lines of a caricature from Molière.

Mme Gasparin is a fairly strong woman in her own right, and although the comte does make a fool of her, she is not lacking in intelligence. She is quite capable of playing the comte at his own game, as he is only too aware:

LE COMTE: [...] Et puis cette femme va peut-être jouer le sentiment avec moi, comme vient de dire son mari; je vais avoir de sa part une scène de la première tendresse, et de la dernière fausseté...
Scene 5.

Her husband's money gives her a certain social standing and she has the confidence to flirt with the comte. Her language is as high a social register as the comte's, and she is just as well versed in the language of *galanterie*. It is clear, for example, that she is offering to sleep with the comte in return for money but of course she cannot express this in a vulgar fashion:

MME GASPARIN: Ah comte, plus vous mettez de noblesse dans vos procédés, et plus vous excitez ma reconnaissance...
Scene 6.

Mme Gasparin is a fairly good match for the comte, and although he triumphs in the end, she is not portrayed as lacking in either intelligence or social graces. She assumes the airs and graces of a *femme noble*:

MME GASPARIN: [...] Je ne suis point ridicule; mais une femme qui se respecte n'est point faite pour entendre toutes ces folies-là. Je m'en vais vous quitter, messieurs.

Scene 10.

Her language is in keeping with the social position which her husband's weath enables her to have. She does not have the same lifestyle as a *femme bourgeoise*: her husband's fortune provides her with enough money to buy diamonds, even though she claims she may have to sell some of them to pay off her gambling debts.

In conclusion, I would say that the key to the differences in social status between the characters in *Le Galant escroc* lies mainly in the portrayal of the comte versus the portrayal of the *financier*. The Gasparin of *Le Galant escroc* is not the same as the *financier* in Turcaret. One of the main differences between the two plays is the fact that Lesage has used Frontin, a servant figure, as the character to outwit the *financier*. Frontin is a development from the comic servant in Molière; he is not the stock comic *niais*, as he is actually clever enough to get the better of Turcaret. In *Le Galant escroc*, however, the relationship between the trickster and his victim is on a different level. By having the comte as the lovable rogue, Collé is perhaps pandering to the whims of his audience, who would be only too happy to see a member of the old nobility get the better of an *homme de finance*. It is not that Gasparin is an out-and-out rogue, or a ridiculously exaggerated character of little taste: Collé does not go that far. However, there was still enough distrust – and jealousy – of the *financiers* in the eighteenth century for Collé to be able to hark back to the distinctions between a *noble de race* and a wealthy businessman.[6] It is like the traditional good overcoming the bad;

[6] The appearance of Beaumarchais's *Les Deux Amis* in 1770 heralds a turning-point in the portrayal of men of finance in eighteenth-century literature. Saint-Alban, the *fermier général* in the play, sacrifices his own love for Pauline and helps her step-father financially so that she is in the position to marry the man she loves, Mélac fils. Saint-Alban is described by

the comte may have little money, but he has kept his cunning and his charm, and in this sense he is always going to be superior to the Gasparins.

Having said that, the Gasparins are not supposed to be the stupid, rather ambitious bourgeois who are in direct opposition to the comte and the chevalier in the play. This play was not designed to make any deep social comments – a point I shall discuss in more detail in Chapter 5 – and if it were heavily weighted on the side of the nobility, then surely the chevalier would have been portrayed as a much more confident, debonair character. Any comments appear to be directed more against the importance of money in this society, for example the discussion between Gasparin and the comte as to what designates an *honnête femme*:

GASPARIN: Allons donc! Et vous appelez cela une honnête femme?
LE COMTE: Eh mais il le faut bien! Son mari a quatre-vingts livres de rente; vois si ce n'est pas là une honnête femme?
Scene 4.

Collé is not just poking fun at the expense of the *financiers*, he is giving us a sideways glance at a small social group. *Le Galant escroc* is not making a social comment, it is rather a social commentary. Collé did manage to gain a position within the *sous-fermes* during his career, and must have benefitted up to a certain point from the support of other *hommes de finance*. Durand goes as far as to claim that Collé used his plays as a means of thanking and showing his support for the *financiers*:

Beaumarchais in the cast list as an 'homme du monde estimable', along with Mélac père, 'receveur général des fermes à Lyon, philosophe sensible'. This play praises the virtues of those who earn an honest living in the world of merchandise and finance, which had hitherto been considered an unsuitable profession for nobles. The portrayal of the *financier* finds its extremes in Lesage and Beaumarchais, with Collé providing the stepping-stone between the two. The portrayal of the merchant and the *financier* on stage is discussed by John Dunkley in *Culture and Revolution*, Chapter 7, pp. 81-97

> Collé, acoquiné à la Ferme générale, en excellents rapports avec les fermiers généraux, trouva dans quelques-unes de ses pièces le moyen de remercier ses protecteurs. Il choisit des personnages de la Ferme, et des officiers de la finance. Dupuis et des Ronais, dans la comédie du même nom, font carrière 'dans la haute finance'. Dupuis précise qu'il veut se défaire d'une charge achetée en 1730 en faveur de des Ronais. Le Dupuis de *La Vérité dans le vin*, ne porte malheureusement pas de titre particulier: il est riche et secrétaire du roi, deux caractères attachés à la qualité de financier.
>
> Durand, 1971, p. 399.

The same surely cannot be said of *Le Galant escroc*: Collé is not outwardly attacking the *financiers* in this play, but he is hardly ingratiating towards them either. *Dupuis et Desronais* is one of his more serious plays, and he had hopes upon writing it for the play to be performed at the Comédie-française, hence he would be trying to make sure that it was acceptable to the censors. Collé is first and foremost a writer of comedies; there is no mention in his diaries of how he is trying either to please or displease his associates. He does claim that he would never openly attack anyone he knew; he wanted to paint society, not pass comment on it. It is highly possible that he may have had some *financiers* in the audience at a performance of *Le Galant escroc*; the aim of this play seems to have been to amuse, not to offend.

4

Features Characteristic of Eighteenth-century French in *Le galant escroc*

In this chapter I shall outline some of the features characteristic of eighteenth-century language in France that are present in *Le Galant escroc*. I shall then look at the implications of these features in more detail in Chapter 6, when discussing my strategy for a translation of the play.

It is difficult to find a precise starting-point for such a discussion, as an examination of the play is in many ways an inadequate way of looking at the language of the time. Written sources are the only evidence of eighteenth-century language which exist - one can never know for sure how French was spoken amongst the people. Certainly there are enough features about the language in *Le Galant escroc* to suggest that this was French as it was spoken by people belonging to a certain social class. Collé's plays were written for a particular audience and intended for performance purposes, therefore one can assume that the language must have a certain amount of realism, and reflected to at least some extent the language which was spoken. However, the fact remains that I can only look at the spoken language as refected in literature.

In *La Langue française au XVIIIe siècle*, Seguin points out that the French language of the eighteenth century was artificial in itself, in so far as it was greatly influenced by the written language of the prominent authors of that century, and the theories of grammarians and lexicographers. It resulted in what he refers to as *la langue post-classique*: a codified set of rules governing grammar and vocabulary, many of which still exist today (Seguin, 1972, pp. 22-25). Stylistically, authors may differ in the eighteenth century, but linguistically they share many common features.

I would like to start with some brief background details about eighteenth-century French, borrowing from information provided by such scholars as Jean-Pierre Seguin, Peter Rickard and Charles Bruneau. I shall then identify some of the features of *Le Galant escroc* which might be considered typical of eighteenth-century French.

BACKGROUND

The wide variations in dialect, spelling and grammatical rules as set out by numerous commentators in the eighteenth century mean that it is extremely difficult to give a brief summary of eighteenth-century developments in the French language. However, this century does mark in many ways a clear step in the development of French. There was great importance placed on clarity of expression, and a distinct effort on the part of grammarians and lexicographers to develop rules and standards.[1] Latin had become a language only taught in schools to the privileged few, and even church services were being conducted for the most part in French. The style of the sixteenth-century authors, with their lack of syntactic clarity and long, rambling sentences had long since been rejected. By the end of the seventeenth century, a rigid set of grammatical rules had already been confirmed. One of the key figures of this movement was Claude Favre de Vaugelas (1585-1650), whose *Remarques sur la langue françoise* (1647) was an attempt towards standardization of the French language. Rickard claims that this work was not entirely systematic, but rather 'a collection of scattered grammatical and lexicographical observations' (Rickard, 1989, p. 103). Nonetheless, the opinions of Vaugelas and other grammarians are a reflection of the major interest being taken in the development of the French language. Another indication of this interest is the many reprints of the *Grammaire générale et*

[1] See Cohen, 1973, p. 222. Interest in matters of language increased so much throughout this century that a *Journal de la langue française* was brought out in 1774.

raisonnée of Claude Lancelot and Antoine Arnauld, known as the *Grammaire de Port-Royal* (1660). This work was frequently reprinted and re-edited in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is essentially a work of grammatical theory, but applied to the French language, relating some points to Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

The eighteenth century saw an increased number of works relating to grammar and lexicon. There was a general expansion of vocabulary, particlarly of scientific and technical terms. Successive editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie françoise* throughout this century referred mainly to literary expression, but Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-72) incorporated a large number of technical terms, which had hitherto been deemed improper in polite conversation. Clarity again was the key: authors and theoreticians alike were interested in distinctions of meaning and register, and the general widening of vocabulary meant an increase in the number of synonyms which had to be carefully defined.

Although the greatest influence on the language was the opinions of the lexicographers and grammarians of this century, the literary authors also had a major part to play in the development of the language. After the death of Louis XIV, the authors no longer met at Court; instead they were to be found in the various salons, cafés and clubs of Paris. Bruneau claims that there was a general trend towards the acceptance of writers no longer having to adopt rigidly the specifications laid down in the Classical period as we now call it, that is towards. 'good' literature not necessarily being seen in terms of how well it imitated the Classical masters such as Corneille and Racine. Voltaire was of the opinion that the masters should not be merely imitated, but lessons should be learned from their writing:

Pour l'Académie Française, quel service ne rendrait-elle pas aux lettrés, à la langue, à la nation, si au lieu de faire imprimer tous les ans des complimens, elle faisait imprimer les bons ouvrages du siècle de Louis XIV

épurés de toutes les fautes de langage qui s'y sont glissées...

Voltaire, *XXIVe Lettre philosophique,*
in Seguin, 1972, p.64.

It was also argued, however, that this 'purification' would only lead to greater restriction: if writers and theoreticians were trying to set up rigid rules of codification, did this not mean that they were aiming to create some kind of 'ideal' writer? Rules may have been laid down by the *Académie* etc., but individual authors did not all necessarily follow these rules. Words judged archaic for example by the *Académie* could still have been used by authors as famous and influential as Diderot and Rousseau.

All this debate concerning French in the eighteenth century was perhaps also a reflection on its popularity and widespread usage in Europe. French was much more widely spoken than it is nowadays, and was popular - particularly amongst the aristocrats - in Germany, England and Russia.
The increasing standardization meant more and more people in France were speaking 'Parisian' French, although some regions retained their dialects with fierce pride. Bruneau claims that in some regions, French must have seemed like a foreign language (Bruneau, 1958, p. 268). This would seem to be true if one considers the findings of the 1774 report entitled *Sur la Nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir les patois et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue françoise*:

From this report it appeared that, out of an estimated population of twenty-five million, at least six million, above all in country districts in the south, knew no French at all, while another six million had only a smattering of the language and were unable to carry on a sustained conversation in it. Only some three million, by virtue either of the region where they happened to live, or of their education, were able to speak it purely; while the number who could write it was, of course, even smaller.

Rickard, 1989, pp. 120-121.

It was only really in the course of the nineteenth century that dialect declined rapidly and Parisian French became much more widely understood in France.

The circulation of Collé's writing would have been very limited by this fact alone, even if they had not been circulated only among his acquaintances.

Such were some of the main developments in eighteenth-century French and the attitudes of some of the authors and grammarians: I shall now look in more detail at the language of *Le Galant ecroc* to see how far it mirrors these features.

ORTHOGRAPHY AND PUNCTUATION

The most basic differences between eighteenth-century and twentieth-century French are simple matters of spelling. However, these differences will make no difference to my translation strategy, as I do not intend to adopt eighteenth-century English conventions in spelling. What is more important is how the dialogue sounds, as I want to produce a version for performance purposes. I shall, however, mention, the differences in punctuation between the older and more recent edition of the play, as these may be to some extent a guide to how Collé intended the play to be read or spoken.

At first the punctuation in the eighteenth-century version seems somewhat strange, with what appears to be over-usage of commas, frequent breaks in the speeches with *points de suspension*, numerous exclamation marks and question marks which are left out in the Pléiade edition more often than not. Eighteenth-century French theatre, looked at in a very broad sense, does have a tendency towards exclamation and hyperbole,[2] and so the punctuation may merely be a reflection of this. It may have been a guide for the readers, a very deliberate means of showing pauses and interruptions so that the text appears clearer on the page.[3] The reader and the actor will also both understand how the author wanted the text to be read or spoken. The

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[2] See for example plays by such diverse authors as Diderot, Carmontelle and Sade.

[3] See Bruneau, 1958, pp. 263-264. Bruneau discusses the sense of rhythm designed to help the reader of Rousseau's work through the careful use of punctuation: 'Il n'est pas douteux qu'il n'ait – hors de toute rhétorique traditionnelle – essayé de créer une phrase chantante, destinée d'ailleurs à être lue des yeux, et non à voix haute'.

punctuation may seem a bit random and overdone to the modern reader, but it must have been like this for a reason and is perhaps as Grimarest suggests simply:

> L'art de marquer par de petits caractères, les endroits d'un discours où l'on doit faire des pauses, et le sens que l'on doit donner à l'expression.
>
> In Seguin, 1972, p. 57.

At a time of such concern over grammatical standardization and clarification, punctuation would have been of the utmost importance.

When considering the punctuation of the Pléiade edition, one cannot forget that the anthology is of commercial interest to the publishers, and it might not be wrong to assume that the punctuation has simply been standardized throughout the whole collection. However, the same treatment is not given to the punctuation of *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV*, for example, which also appears in the same eighteenth-century anthology as *Le Galant escroc*. In general, it must be said that there are fewer exclamation and question marks in *La Partie...*, reflecting the more serious tone of the play. At times, the Pléiade edition adds more exclamation marks, or replaces a question mark with an exclamation mark.

All things considered, the differences in punctuation between the two editions of *Le Galant escroc*. may seem fairly unimportant to an overall reading of the text, but there may be times that the eighteenth-century punctuation may suggest something more about the tone of a particular speech, for example. If this is the case, I shall comment further on punctuation differences in my points of detail.

VOCABULARY

As I have mentioned previously, the French language was open to many new words at the time, particularly in the scientific and technical fields. The widening of vocabulary in this way does not really affect the reading of *Le*

Galant escroc: the general public was becoming more aware of technical and scientific terms, including those used in the world of finance, through the increased interest in such works as the *Encyclopédie*; but as we are given very few details about Gasparin's profession, there is little call for Collé to use many financial terms.[4] I do not intend at this point to go through the text highlighting those words which now seem archaic, or typical of the eighteenth century. This is something which obviously has to be done for translation purposes, with close reference to the eighteenth-century dictionaries. However, at this point I shall mention some of the general features of eighteenth-century vocabulary which may require attention.

In this connection, an important point to consider is the matter of what was considered 'popular' language at the time, and again Seguin's *La Langue française au XVIII^e siècle* is an excellent source of information. One point in particular which is of interest is the use of *ça* rather than *cela* which in the eighteenth century, as today, was seen as a much less formal version. Many authors rejected the use of *ça* in literary usage as they saw it as being too vulgar – it does not appear in Marivaux plays for example. It is accepted by the *Académie* in 1798, but noted as *populaire et familier*. Most of the time, Collé retains *cela* in his characters' speeches; even during the comte's monologues, the more informal *ça* is not used:

LE COMTE: Cela est divin! sublime! ce cher mari qui me prête de l'argent pour payer sa femme! cela est unique!

Scene 5.

Cela was perhaps the common usage of people of such high social rank; nowadays the norm would probably be *c'est divin, ça!*, or something along

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[4] In *A History of the French Language Through Texts* (1996, p. 179), Ayres-Bennett comments on the increased use of technical vocabulary in the eighteenth century. An example is given of a text discussing agricultural economy, in which new vocabulary had been coined, including the words *commerçant* and *commerce*, which were also financial terms (pp. 212-215). See also Rickard, 1989, p. 115, and Seguin, 1972, p. 10.

those lines.The use of *ça* also appears in other literature of the time; one could take the example of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, where the characters are of an equal - and in some cases higher - social rank to the characters in *Le Galant escroc*. Brunot quotes the example of Cécile Volange's letters:

> Depuis il étoit devenu si triste... que *ça* me faisoit de la peine... C'est peut-être mal fait de baiser une lettre comme *ça*... Je sais bien que *ça* ne se doit pas... *Ça* n'est pas juste non plus... Oh! *ça*, par exemple, j'aime encore mieux qu'il soit triste...
>
> *Liaisons*, XVI, in Brunot, p.1436.

However, Brunot also points out that the use of *ça* in this case merely reflects the naivety of the character: this is not the norm for the educated class, neither in everyday speech, nor in letters. I shall return to the point about register in my discussion on translation strategy.

At the translation stage itself, it will be necessary to pay attention to expressions in the play which seem archaic nowadays, and which may have already been archaic in Collé's day. Take the following examples:

Parbleu! (Le comte, Sc. 1.)
La peste! (Gasparin, Sc. 4.)
De grâce (Mme Gasparin, Sc. 10.)
Que diable! (Le comte, Sc. 12.)

A point relating to these examples is discussed by Picoche and Marchello-Nizia in *Histoire de la langue française*. The rejection of *mots bas* by the *Académie*

set a certain linguistic standard which an eighteenth-century gentleman had to adhere to if he wanted to be considered an *honnête homme*:

> Il ne «prend pas en vain le nom de Dieu», même caché sous des suffixes anodins comme dans *pardinne, pardienne, parbleu*; ne *sacre* pas, même en employant *sapré* pour *sacré*; n'invoque pas le *diable*, même sous la forme *diantre*; bref, il n'exprime pas son mépris et sa colère à travers des mots mêlant le sacré, la sexualité et la défécation.
>
> Pinoche and Marchello-Nizia, 1994, p. 353.

If the Gasparins were the only characters to use such expressions, the argument would hold that their language was of a lower social register than that of the nobles, i.e. the comte and the chevalier. However, as this is not the case, the suggestion is that such expressions reflect, rather, a familiar, conversational tone between social equals.[5]

On the whole, the vocabulary of *Le Galant escroc* does not seem antiquated, and at no point in the play does a character say something which would be *totally* unfamiliar to the modern reader or listener. Certainly there is a big difference between the means of expression then, and how a French person would speak nowadays, but this again brings in the difficult question of whether the dialogue should be accepted as normal conversation, or whether I should be considering the play as a written piece essentially, which just happened to be spoken aloud.

Another question is that of the type of style this is written in: is there a mixture of tone in the play? A few comparisons with other authors will enable me to establish whether the play is a parody of a particular style for example, or whether the language would have been considered normal, everyday conversation at the time (see Chapter 5, pp. 141-144). This will have implications for a translation of the play which goes some way to recreating – as much as possible – the style and intentions of the author. *Le Galant escroc*

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[5] The chevalier does not use expressions such as *parbleu*. In this sense, his language does appear more pompous and literary, which is a point to which I shall return when discussing my translation strategy.

was designed as a piece of entertainment for the duc d'Orléans' private theatre, and was not originally intended for a wide audience (it is only plays such as *La Veuve* and *La Partie...* which Collé sees as being worthy of the Comédie-française). One can assume, therefore, that *Le Galant escroc* fits in to the genre of *théâtre de société*: light entertainment, designed to amuse, rather than to instruct or indeed criticize. It is gentle laughter about characters such as the *financier* and the naive chevalier. Having said that, the amusing little comments on the *financier* etc. do make this play stand out from the *proverbes dramatiques*, for example, of an author such as Carmontelle (e.g. *Le Peintre en cul-de-sac*, *Le Chanteur italien* etc.). These are cruder, more basic forms of humour, designed to make the audience laugh out loud, rather than smile at the shared joke, which, in *Le Galant escroc*, is often veiled by the language of *galanterie* – the most obvious example being the seduction scene between the comte and Mme Gasparin. The subject matter of *Le Peintre en Cul-de-sac* is M. le Maire's annoyance at how people use this particular street as a public toilet. The basic humour is reflected by the uncomplicated, straightforward language throughout this extremely short play. The opening scene, for example, shows the master discussing domestic matters with his servant:

M. LE MAIRE, *en robe de chambre*: Eh bien, Le Gris, c'est-il fini?
LE GRIS: Oui, monsieur; j'ai tout nettoyé; mais c'est tous les jours à recommencer.
M. LE MAIRE: Je le sais bien; et encore cela sent mauvais toute la journée.
Carmontelle, 1974, p. 742.

The vocabulary and the language in general of *Le Galant escroc* is more sophisticated, in the sense that one is aware that all of the characters are well educated and of a high social rank. Granted, the situation is completely different to that of *Le Peintre...*, but Collé could have quite easily introduced servant figures as a means of introducing basic farce and lowering the language register. The comte and Gasparin do talk to one another in quite

familiar terms when discussing the comte's 'conquest';[6] Gasparin's language in particular shows touches of a lower language register (e.g. exclamations such as *La peste!* etc.). The comte does not have the same style as a Marivaux character: the chevalier's ramblings about Sophie in Scene 2 are like a pale imitation of marivaudage. His failure to sound elegant suggests that this is a deliberate attempt on Collé's part to make fun of the chevalier's lack of experience. He tries desperately to sound like a man hopelessly in love, but his lack of imagination linguistically, and the comte's more down-to-earth approach to the situation, give the language a strong hint of parody. Once again, I have to take this into account when adopting a translation strategy; the tone does change in some of the scenes, although overall there is a natural sense of frivolity in the dialogue which is the main feature of the language.

SYNTAX

In the eighteenth century, standardization of syntax was the main aim of the grammarians. The rigidity of word order, for example, was a matter of congratulation for them, although many authors such as Diderot saw the setting up of hard and fast rules as a barrier to poetic creativity (Rickard, 1989, p. 138). There is very little difference in the word order in *Le Galant escroc* compared to nowadays, apart from the occasional example such as the following:

LE COMTE: Mais je suis heureux de ne vous avoir pas manqué.

Scene 4.

and also:

MME GASPARIN, *tendrement*: J'aurais mieux fait de ne vous point voir...

[6] The comte and Gasparin address one another as 'vous' throughout most of the play; however, in Scene 10 there is a sudden switch to 'tu', as the comte describes his dealings with the *honnête femme*. The use of 'vous' suggests that they respect one another as social equals, but the sudden switch to 'tu' suggests heightened camaraderie. For further discussion of this point, see pp. 171-172.

Scene 6.

Nowadays, the *ne... pas/point* would have come before the object pronoun and the infinitive.Yet before these two examples, we have the chevalier in Scene 2 saying *pour ne pas connaître encore* (p. 3), with both elements of the negative preceding the infinitive.

There is also a tendency for Collé to use inversion in questions, rather than the more familiar *est-ce que;* again this can seem somewhat literary to the modern reader, particularly if the verb is in the future or conditional tense. According to Rickard, inversion would have been used deliberately by an eigheenth-century author to indicate that the character concerned is an educated speaker, even though the construction was rarely used in spoken French:

> The inversion of verb and subject, kept up as a matter of grammar, and greatly cultivated as a matter of style, is almost systematically avoided in the spoken language, even when strict grammar calls for its use.
>
> Rickard, 1989, p. 145.

Yet even nowadays, inversion is still very much a part of the elegant rhetorical tradition, and quite complicated or tongue-twisting phrases do occur in prepared speeches, for example.[7]

Negation in *Le Galant escroc* also differs slightly from modern use. The most obvious difference is that *ne... point* is used far more often than it would be nowadays:

> LE CHEVALIER: M. Gasparin ne demande pas mieux, mais sa femme n'est point de cet avis; et, parce que je ne suis point riche, l'intérêt s'oppose à la plus belle union.
>
> Scene 2.

---

[7] A summary of the use of inversion in contemporary French for stylistic reasons can be found in Price, 1971, pp. 258-264.

As today, *ne... point* tended to be used for emphatic purposes, but it does occur a lot more frequently in this text than it would do in a modern text. Negatives tend to be limited to *ne... pas* and *ne... point*: Seguin provides the following information about other forms which would have been rejected by many 'serious' authors at the time:

ne... goutte est jugé familier (Férand.) ou condamné (Voltaire).
ne... mot de même, quoiqu'on le trouve, avec toute sa valeur négative sans *ne* dans les *Confessions*: "Je lui en parle avant de nous mettre à table: *mot* comme auparavant."
ne... brin est considéré par certains comme populaire. Mais Restif écrit encore: "Vous faites la bégueule et cela ne vous va brin.

Seguin, 1972, p. 88.

The fact that Collé does not use the more popular *ne... brin* etc. is a further indication of the elevated language of his characters.

It is noticeable that the subjunctive mood is used frequently in the play, and there is strict adherence to the rules governing the concordance of tenses, i.e. the imperfect and pluperfect subjunctive are not automatically replaced by the present subjunctive. The following examples illustrate that point:

LE CHEVALIER: ...Vous savez que Sophie et moi nous avons été élevés ensemble, et qu'elle m'était destinée, avant que ses parents eussent perdu tous leurs biens.

Scene 2.

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Eh! bien, Madame, c'est le parti le plus sage que vous ayiez pu prendre.

Scene 6.

There certainly seems to be little or no evidence of obvious avoidance of the subjunctive in the text: Seguin mentions (p. 123) how for some authors, use of the subjunctive was like a religion they followed (e.g. Diderot). Grevisse claims that grammarians of the century were already lamenting lapses in the rules governing tense, with the imperfect subjunctive quite often being replaced by the present, and the pluperfect rarely figuring even in literary

texts (Grevisse, 1993, p. 1270). There was, in fact, widespread confusion between the imperfect subjunctive of verbs like *aller* and the *passé simple* form. Graphically, there were also variations, with versions *que j'aie* and *que j'aye* both existing. On the whole, I think it is fair to say that *Le Galant escroc* contains a lot of verbs in subjunctive form, but the rules governing when to use it seem to have been the same as today. The key point for discussion in my translation strategy is whether the subjunctive forms would have sounded stodgy or pompous to Collé's audience at the time.

A further element of orality in the play is the repeated use of *c'est* and *c'est que*. The following example is a case in point:

C'est une créature que cela! (Gasparin, Scene 4.)

Apart from the use of *créature* in this description, the structure is important, as it highlights the conversational tone of the play which is, in fact, very similar to contemporary colloquial French.

A second example of constructions including the use of *que* occurs in the seduction scene betwen Mme Gasparin and the comte. The comte's elevated language contains a lot of long sentences with subordinate clauses linked by *que*:

LE COMTE: ...Et si j'étais aussi vétillard que vous l'êtes sur le sentiment, savez-vous bien que vous me feriez imaginer que vous pensez que le plaisir que je vous fais me coûte quelque chose?...

Scene 6.

What is so unusual about the above example is not the particular use of *que* (it is used no differently in contemporary French), but the sheer concentration of *que* in one sentence. As mentioned previously, there was a preoccupation with precision in this century, but many authors rejected the clumsy repetition of *que*:

Mais les écrivains à l'oreille délicate continuent à éliminer les que rocailleux:"Tant fut opéré par le dit Quillau, que j'en fus pour mon privilège, et n'ai tiré jamais un liard de cette édition" (Rouss., VIII, 202, *Conf.*, VII).

Brunot, 1933, p. 1929.

This suggests then that the aforementioned speech by the comte is meant to sound somewhat awkward; he is deliberately parodying the language of *galanterie*, with a view to making the audience aware of his less than honorable intentions. At this point, one can imagine the comte winking to the audience, or at least saying the speech with a wry smile on his face.

Note also the particular use of *que* in the following example:

M. GASPARIN: Eh! dites-moi son nom, que je voie si je la connais?

Scene 4.

The use of *que* in place of *pour que* is common today in colloquial French, and this was also the case in the eighteenth century (Grevisse, 1993, p.1540). It would not, therefore, have sounded unusual for the eighteenth-century audience to hear *que* in this sentence, and also points to the fact that Gasparin is talking to the comte in fairly familiar tones.

The use of adverbs is a feature of the syntax of *Le Galant escroc* which differs at times from what we might expect in modern French. *Combien* is used in the following phrase, where perhaps we might expect something like *à quel point*:

MME GASPARIN: Pardonnez-moi, Monsieur. La réflexion m'a fait sentir combien il était dangereux pour moi de vous avoir obligation!

Scene 6.

One cannot dismiss the use of *combien* here as being archaic: a similar expression may occur in modern literary French, although to hear such a construction in conversation is highly improbable. According to Grevisse (1993, p. 615), this particular use of *combien* was considered *recherché* even in

the eighteenth century, which suggests that Mme Gasparin's speech would in fact have come across at the time as being slightly affected.

A similar point could be made about prepositions, for example the use of *pour* in the following:

LE CHEVALIER: Oh! pour moi, je suis assez heureux pour ne pas connoître encore cette dépravation là.

Scene 2.

Some of the adverbs, prepositions and indeed conjunctions in the play may seem slightly archaic in a particular phrase, but it may well be that they are still used in a similar way nowadays (e.g. *plutôt que de*, rather than *au lieu de*). However, the question is whether they would be used so readily and so often in everyday conversation. Again, Grevisse will provide some guidance on this point, and I shall be referring back to this when it comes to a detailed translation of the text, and the strategy which I choose to adopt when looking at particular constructions. It is a question of deciding first of all whether the adverbs etc. would have sounded archaic at the time. If it does appear to have been an archaized use at the time, I shall then have to decide whether I want to convey this element of archaism in my translation.

The use of pronouns in the text also requires attention. One aspect which makes it appear similar to modern-day spoken French is the frequent use of the emphatic personal pronoun, e.g.:

LE COMTE: ...Je n'en crois rien, moi...

Scene 1.

The tendency in this century for clarity and precision may also explain the inclusion of the inanimate *le* in examples such as the following:

M. GASPARIN: La peste! je le crois bien que le Chevalier voudrait déjà avoir épousé Sophie!

Scene 4.

Brunot points out (p. 1668) that the *Académie* would insist on the addition of the inanimate *le* as being correct usage. In practice, however, authors tended to use it as they pleased. As the use of the inaminate *le* is not particlarly prominent or noticeable in the play, I do not think one can assume that Collé's main intention was to show the elevated language of the characters: there are other features of Gasparin's speech, for example, which suggest the familiar tone he adopts when talking to the comte.

ORAL VERSUS WRITTEN

This play belongs by definition to a hybrid genre, in that it is a written text designed to be spoken aloud. As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, one must be careful not to assume that the language in the play is an exact reflection of how people actually spoke to one another at the time. One must have reservations about just how spontaneous Collé's writing is, as he spent years going over all of his plays before he would consider them good enough for performance. What, then, is the tone of the dialogue in this play, and is it similar to that of other authors in the century? Is it essentially a piece of worked literature, or are there marked features which emphasize the oral qualities of this genre? These markers would consist of any elements, or indications which are essential in a written text to show that it is meant to be spoken.

The number of questions and exclamations in the play is a typical aspect of the theatre of this period, and is a sure indication of the orality of the genre. There is a huge difference, however, between this play and the writing of someone like Vadé, whose writing imitates the pronunciation of *le français populaire* at the time. The following is an extract from his *Lettres de la Grenouillè*:

Monsieux,

Y a du grabuge à note maison par rapport à moi et ma mere à cause d'vous; j'étais après à lire vote lettre dont j'nai pas pû achever la fin comme vous aller voir, si bien donc qu'vla qu'est ben, ma mere entrit sur le champ, alle m'dit bonnement quoiqu'c'est qu'ça qu'ta là? Moi, j'dis rien. Ah, dit-elle, c'est queuqu'chose. Ce n'est rien j'vous dis. J'parie, dit-elle, qu'c'est queuqu'chose? Pardy ma mere j'dis, ce n'est rien, eh puis quand ça serait queuqu'chose j'dis, ça n'vous frait rien; là-dessus alle m'arrachit vote lettre et puis alle lisit l'écriture tout du long. Ah! Ah! se mit-elle à dire, c'est donc comme ça qu'vous y allez aveuc votre Jérôme Dubois?...

In Seguin, 1972, p. 27.

This is only a short extract, but it is sufficient to illustrate what I mean by the oral markers in Vadé, which are very different from those in *Le Galant escroc*. These oral markers include omissions of words and word endings which would have virtually disappeared in spoken French, as they do nowadays; the opening sentence of the letter for example omits the 'il y'. This extract also takes into account the pronunciation of certain words, converting them to a written version which, although incorrect in a grammatical sense, imitates the phonetics of the speech which the hearer perceives. Hence the hearer recognizes the prononciation 'alle', rather than 'elle' and 'queuqu'chose', rather than 'quelque chose'. There is a huge difference in register between this and Collé's writing: Vadé has produced an imitation of the *bas langages*, popular Parisian dialect of the ordinary people who would presumably be of a lower social class than those characters in *Le Galant escroc*. Once again, this is only an assumption as there is no direct proof that this is how French was spoken amongst the lower orders; one can only compare the traits of this text with other plays. What is striking in this extract as compared to *Le Galant escroc* is the way in which the pronunciation of the words seems to dominate the orthography (e.g. *note maison, si bien donc qu'vla qu'est ben*).

The language of *Le Galant escroc* is not of the *poissard* genre, but does have certain markers to show that it is a play essentially written with performance in mind. As well as the frequent questions and exclamations,

there are a number of hesitations and interruptions within each speech – as mentioned before, the modern Pléiade edition has not so many *points de suspension*. Diderot could perhaps be seen as the first author to cultivate this use of *points de suspension* in his writing (see Brunot, 1933, p. 2059); the vogue affected the *drame* and the *tragédie* in particular, but was also common in the novels of the century. The *points de suspension* were a means of expressing the language of passion, where the lover is hesitant and feels mixed emotion, without resorting to the long tirades of what we now term the Classical period. *Points de suspension* also simply suggest realism in speech, i.e. people do not express themselves clearly all of the time; they may hesitate or their thoughts may be disjointed. Obviously there is a clear distinction between the dialogue of *Le Galant escroc* and the *style noble* of Racine, with its structured rhythm and powerful imagery. There is, however, a certain regularity in the speeches - they are not disjointed or rambling.

The relevance of the points I have made about the language of *Le Galant escroc* will become clear, together with what I have already covered in previous chapters, when they are used in the elaboration of a translation strategy. This chapter has covered only the main features of the language; particular details will be discussed at the relevant points in the completed translation.

5

Considerations of Genre in *Le Galant escroc*

The aim of this chapter is to establish the type of comic genre to which *Le Galant escroc* belongs, with reference to other eighteenth-century authors. Contemporary criticism of eighteenth-century theatre tends to take one of two forms: firstly, the development of comedy from the time of Molière through to Beaumarchais, with reference to the most prominent authors of the time as we now see them. Secondly, some critics provide discussion of the 'other' repertory, i.e. those plays which were written for the minor public theatres and private theatres. Rougemont is one of the few critics of recent years to attempt an overview of tragedy and comedy in the eighteenth century from all of the outlets available at the time. She admits, however, the difficulty of defining comedy and of discussing its development as a genre (Rougemont, 1988, p. 24). The problem I am faced with in discussing the genre of *Le Galant escroc* is that it does not fit neatly into one particular type of genre, if indeed any play could be said to do so. The difficulty is heightened by the fact that the play was not originally intended for public performance, and so the author did not have to adhere to the rules of *bienséance* which applied to a certain extent to all of those plays destined for the public stage. Nevertheless, by means of intertextual analysis, is is possible to highlight the features of the play which situate it within some categories, as opposed to others.

My intention is not to discuss the development of the comic genre in the *siècle des Lumières* in any depth: the confines of this thesis do not allow for it, nor do I feel it is necessary for an analysis of *Le Galant escroc*. However, the hybrid nature of this play means that elements of different genres appear to have been incorporated into its structure, and therefore I may want to refer to different genres as a means of illustrating particular aspects of some scenes.

The characters in *Le Galant escroc* have different aims within the one situation, and there are consequent changes in tone throughout the play.

I shall begin by discussing in greater detail those features of the play which characterize it as *théâtre de société*, rather than suitable for the public stage. This will involve a discussion of the degree of licentiousness of this play in comparison with works of other authors. The remainder of the chapter will be an analysis of the play in terms of its intertextuality, highlighting any features which are recurrent in other eighteenth-century plays.

FEATURES OF THE PLAY WHICH ESTABLISH IT AS BEING MORE SUITABLE FOR THE PRIVATE THEATRES

The restrictions imposed by the royal theatres were a constant source of irritation to Collé, as he felt that the natural *gaieté* of the French nation was being curbed by the concern over *bienséances*. Audiences were beginning to look to the genres of the *drame* and the *comédie larmoyante* as more edifying, moralistic forms of comedy.[1] For Collé, the true essence of comedy did not lie in the moral content, but rather required a deep understanding of all walks of society, and an ability to find the simple things in life amusing:

> L'auteur tragique tire tout de son imagination; l'auteur comique n'est qu'un peintre, qui ne peut rendre que les tableaux qu'il a vus dans le monde.
>
> « Étudiez la cour, et connoissez la ville. »
>
> Son imagination ne peut lui servir que dans l'arrangement de sa fable, et à lier les unes aux autres les scènes dont il a été témoin, et qu'il peut étendre aussi loin que la nature, qu'il doit toujours avoir pour guide, le lui permet. Le fond de son art est l'étude des mœurs des hommes et des différentes sortes de ridicules, dont ils sont variés à l'infini, ce qu'il ne peut apprendre qu'après avoir été répandu dans le monde quelque temps, et en lui supposant de bons

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[1] A comprehensive discussion of the *drame* and the development of the comic genre from the time of Molière can be found in Gaiffe's *Le Drame en France au XVIII^e siècle* (1971) [1910]. The origins and development of the *genre larmoyant* are examined in Lanson's *Nivelle de la Chaussée et la comédie larmoyante* (1971), and Vincent-Buffault's *Histoire des larmes* (1986). These genres will be discussed in more detail at a later point in this chapter, as elements of both can be found in *Le Galant escroc*. An example of Collé's frustration over the lack of *gaieté* in French theatre since the time of Molière can be found in *Journal* 2, p. 311.

yeux, pour apercevoir; il n'en est pas de même de l'auteur tragique, qui de son cabinet peut connoître la marche des passions et du cœur humain; les passions sont les mêmes dans tous les hommes de tous les siècles; elles ne sont pas susceptibles des différentes nuances que ces mêmes passions prennent dans le comique, et qui dépendent des usages, des modes, du goût du siècle, et de mille autres circonstances qui constituent le ridicule.

Journal 1, pp. 162-163. (See also *Journal* 2, p. 15 and *Journal* 3, p. 35.)

The private theatre gave Collé a certain amount of leeway; he was able to portray weaknesses in moral standards without fear of censorship. According to Gaiffe, it is the *théâtre de société* which provided a true picture of the *mœurs* of this society, and he gives particular mention to Collé as being the best representative of this particular genre (Gaiffe, 1971, p. 364).

The amount of freedom allotted to the author of texts destined for private performances was, however, limited up to a certain point. The duc d'Orléans may have supported Collé throughout his career, but he did not always give him free rein as to the subject matter of his plays. This point is borne out by the fact that the duc insisted on Collé's rewriting *La Vérité dans le vin* , and how he also heeded the advice of Mme Montesson to look for other playwrights whose work was more fitting for someone of his standing (details of which points have been covered in Chapter 1, pp. 20-21). Collé's *théâtre de société* cannot be classed as pornographic; the force of *Le Galant escroc* lies in the suggestiveness behind the speeches, and the dramatic irony of the comte's manipulation of Mme Gasparin and her husband. Examples of plays of a much more explicit sexual nature can be found in *Théâtre érotique français au XVIII^e siècle* (1993).[2]

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[2] It is interesting to note that Collé's *Alphonse l'Impuissant*, dated 1738, is included in this selection. This is a *tragédie en un acte et en vers:* an obvious parody of the much revered genre of tragedy. The basic plot concerns Alphonse, king of Portugal, whose lack of virility is an embarrassment to him. The crude subject matter is combined with the hyperbole and elevated language typical of tragedy.

Although, before translation, one must take into consideration the possbility that *Le Galant escroc* was edited before publishing in order to get past the censors, Collé's references to this play in his *Journal* seem to suggest otherwise. The following extract is dated March 1767, just after the play had been published:

> Je ne sais pas encore si cette comédie prendra; mais ce que je pense, c'est que je n'ai de mes jours fait un ouvrage plus régulier et plus agréable que celui-là. C'est le fond le plus heureux que j'aie jamais traité. Tout y est en action, l'exposition elle-même: aucune scène vide; un comique de situation qui se soutient depuis le premier mot de la pièce jusqu'au dernier; les caractères variés et tous pris dans la nature; une scène de deux amants, de la plus grande vérité puisqu'il étoit impossible qu'on imaginât de traiter une pareille scène autre part que dans une comédie de société; l'action de la pièce, très-rapide, puisqu'elle peut se passer en trois ou quatre heures au plus; tout le comique, toutes les plaisanteries sortant du fond même du sujet; chaque personnage ayant exactement le style qui convient à son caractère; et comme, excepté celui de Gasparin, tous les autres caractères sont d'un genre noble, le style général de cette comédie est dans le ton du plus grand monde, et de la très-bonne compagnie.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 3, p. 131.

He makes a clear distinction between this play and, for example, *La Tête à perruque* which he describes as a mere *folie*, intended as a sideshow for guests attending a fireworks display (Collé in Truchet, 1974, p. 711). However, as discussed in Chapter 1, *Le Galant escroc* has certain features which differentiate it from those plays which Collé wrote specifically for performance at the Comédie-française. I shall now examine these features in greater detail.

A main feature of *Le Galant escroc* is the combination of debauchery – represented by the characters of the Comte, and M. and Mme Gasparin – and the more idealised portrayal of love as seen through the eyes of the chevalier

and Sophie.[3] Debauchery and love are juxtaposed in the play, the force of which is that the audience is never allowed to take things for granted: does life revolve around intrigue and deceit, or is the chevalier's attitude to love the right attitude to have? A prime example is Scene 2, where the chevalier's description of Sophie is full of hyperbole. He places her on a pedestal, but the comte dismisses this notion with the following comment:

LE COMTE, *riant*: Ah! ah! ah! on voit bien, mon petit chevalier, que tu ne fais que d'entrer dans le monde! Quel phébus! Tiens, mon ami, réduisons cela au simple; dis-moi, naturellement, l'as-tu? dis-moi, l'as-tu?

Scene 2.

By making fun of the chevalier, Collé is also mocking the typical portrayal of love by those authors who want to follow the *bienséances* of the royal theatres, for example Marivaux, La Chaussée, and Diderot.[4] The juxtaposition of debauchery and 'true love' undermines the sentimentalized view of love, and introduces a certain degree of seediness which would have been dismissed as crude by the Comédie-française audience of the late eighteenth century. A further example occurs in Scene nine, after the poignant scene between Sophie and the chevalier. M. Gasparin surprises the chevalier at Sophie's feet, and when the chevalier begs him to persuade Mme Gasparin to let the wedding go ahead, Gasparin removes any notion of romanticism:

GASPARIN: Eh mais, vraiment oui, je vois très bien que cela presse.

Scene 9.

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[3] Sophie's character requires careful consideration, as her admissions in Scene 8 reveal her as being independent and liberated. I shall return to this point on page 130. It is the chevalier who is much more naive, and who bears the brunt of the comte's gentle sarcasm.

[4] Such treatment of the theme of love is discussed in Trahard's *Les Maîtres de la sensibilité française au XVIII^e siècle* (1931). Although this study is dated, this author looks at the portrayal of *sensibilité* by a wide range of authors, rather than concentrating on one in particular, which is more succinct and helpful for the purposes of this thesis. I shall return to the notion of *sensibilité* in the next section of this chapter.

The underlying tone in this play is always one of sexual licence, although it does not have the explicitness of the *théâtre érotique* of this century.[5] The tone is playful, rather than coarse. The comte's boasting of his sexual prowess in Scene 10 has the same effect: we are meant to smile at his frankness and confidence, rather than be offended. Of course, one must remember that to judge the play by today's standards puts it in a much different light; although some of the comments seem a little tame to the twentieth-century audience or reader, the *bienséances* of the French theatre in the eighteenth century tend to suggest that such comments would have been considered more risqué. It is impossible to gauge the difference in standards between the two centuries, and indeed the transposition from France to Britain is another point of consideration. This is a matter which I discuss further in the next chapter, when discussing strategic decisions for a translation of the play.

The play contains some open admissions and comments which would have been dismissed as too blatant for the public stage. It was one thing to be aware of, and adopt, certain libertinist attitudes, but quite another thing to openly admit any moral lacking in public. Gasparin's candid admission that he is going to set up a meeting with his mistress in Scene 4 is a comment which simply would not have passed the royal theatre censors. His description of his wife as being as cold as a statue in bed is also unsuitable, with the added lack of sublety being that he says such a thing in her presence. (Scene 10, p. 16).[6] There was a certain standard which was expected to be

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[5] This element of suggestiveness is exploited to the full in Carmontelle's *La Robe de chambre*, in which a young prude mistakenly thinks an older man is trying to seduce her, when in fact he is simply asking permission to wear his dressing-gown in her presence. Considering the sexual undertones of many of Carmontelle's *proverbes*, Mme Montesson's reasons for wanting to replace Collé's plays by these seem questionable. Given Collé's obvious dislike of her influence over the duc d'Orléans, it seems more likely that she simply had a personal dislike of him.

[6] Although the plot of *Le Galant escroc* does revolve around the seduction of a married woman, there is a lot more left unsaid than in, for example, *La Vérité dans le vin* and *La Tête à perruque*. In *La Vérité dans le vin* for example, La Présidente and Mme Dupuis openly discuss the various adulterous affairs of their past. One particular comment from Mme Dupuis is that she loves her oldest son as though he weren't her husband's, which he definitely is, because he is the eldest (in Truchet, 1974, p. 683).

upheld in the royal theatres; Gaiffe comments on how the minor theatres were able to imitate everyday conversation without fear of censorship, whereas the plays performed at the royal theatres had to follow literary conventions. The *bienséances* expected at the royal theatres were such that 'l'auteur se croit tenu d'être littéraire, d'avoir du style, c'est-à-dire d'écrire avec toute la pompe et la prétention dont il est capable' (Gaiffe, 1971, p. 507). The comte's avowal of his attraction towards Mme Gasparin in Scene eight lacks the subtlety and poeticism of a declaration of love portrayed at the Comédie-française:

LE COMTE: N'est-il pas tout naturel de s'adresser à une personne dont on est sûr d'être aimé?... Car je ne crois pas que vous puissiez douter de mon amour... En vérité je raffole de vous!

Scene 6.

The portrayal of a character of the comte's social standing demands a certain amount of respect at the royal theatres; he has to be seen to be acting in a noble fashion, even if this was not always the case in reality.

The fact that *Le Galant escroc* deals with the theme of adultery proves that Collé had no intention of presenting this play to the royal theatres: adultery was considered a taboo subject on stage. Collé talks of a play entitled *Caliste ou la Belle Pénitente* (author unknown), in his *Journal*, dated April 1750. This play had been presented to the *Comédiens français*, but had been refused as the subject matter was adultery and hence '*absolument contre les mœurs*' (*Journal* 1, p. 156). The popularity of the *drame* had reinforced the sense of decorum and morality which the royal actors were required to uphold. Characters could not openly admit to adultery on stage; affairs were permitted to be mentioned under certain conditions: if, for example, the woman concerned was a young widow, then that was acceptable. This is the main difference between *Le Galant escroc* and *La Veuve*: it is possible to have

the young widow of *La Veuve* admitting to having an affair,[7] but to have Sophie declaring that she is willing to sleep with the chevalier before marriage would have overstepped the boundaries of taste at the Comédie-française. The public expected to see characters such as Rosalie and Dorval of Diderot's *Le Fils naturel;* Diderot portrays a young couple obviously attracted to one another, but whose virtue and sense of loyalty tells them to curb their naturel urges:

ROSALIE: Que faut-il que je fasse?
DORVAL: Nous avons placé l'estime de nous-mêmes à un haut prix!
ROSALIE: Est-ce mon désespoir que vous voulez?
DORVAL: Non. Mais il est des occasions où il n'y a qu'une action forte qui nous relève.

In Chouillet and Chouillet (eds.), 1980, pp. 76-77.

The characters of *Le Fils naturel* may be above reprehension, but it is the lack of *vraisemblance* which Collé criticizes most of all. He makes a scathing attack on this play in particular in his *Journal*:

C'est donc une pièce d'un homme de beaucoup d'esprit (car il y en a dans ce mauvais ouvrage), mais qui n'a ni le génie ni talent pour le genre dramatique, et qui n'a pas les premières notions de l'art théâtral. C'est pourtant d'après ce chef-d'œuvre qu'il a l'intrépidité de donner une espèce de politique, et de faire le législateur aveugle sur des choses qu'il n'a point vues, et que vraisemblement la nature lui a voilées pour toujours.

Collé, *Journal* 2, p. 75.[8]

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[7] Just before his work is due to be published, Collé still expresses a fear that *La Veuve* will not be considered suitable for the *mœurs* of the French public: 'Comme on suppose jamais au théâtre qu'une femme vive avec un homme, à moins qu'on ne le prononce, l'on n'auroit pas entendu sûrement le sens de cette pièce; et l'on auroit dit, du caractère de la Veuve, qu'il n'étoit point dans la nature; on n'auroit su ce que c'étoit qu'une femme qui aime son amant à la fureur, et qui refuse obstinément de l'épouser; cela n'est ni vrai ni vraisemblable. C'est ce motif qui me fait déterminer à faire imprimer d'abord cette comédie. Je la donne telle que je l'avois faite pour la société. J'espère que l'on verra, dis-je, quoique j'aie pris les tours les plus décents et les plus délicats pour établir ce fait, que j'ai gazé le plus honnêtement qu'il m'a été possible.' *Journal* 2, pp. 333-334.

[8] This opinion does not seem totally unjustified, as *Le Fils naturel* had very little success on the public stage, only being given one performance at the Comédie-française in 1771. According to Truchet, it did achieve a certain amount of renown at the duc d'Ayen's private theatre at

Collé is fully aware of what is expected of authors writing for the Comédie-française, and shows he is fully capable of fulfilling those expectations by writing *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV* and *Dupuis et Desronais*. However, it is when writing for the private theatres that he succeeds best at producing what he sees as good theatre, in the sense that his work has many fewer restrictions.

The portrayal of Sophie

I would like to return at this point to the character of Sophie to illustrate how she in particular firmly places this play into a genre more suitable for the private theatre. The status of women – as regards both their social position and their portrayal in literature – had greatly changed since the development of the *salon* culture in the eighteenth century. Strong female characters in plays were not uncommon; it is a small step to make, for example, from the Célimène of Molière's *Le Misanthrope* to the Rosalie of Beaumarchais' *Le Barbier de Séville*. However, both female characters in these plays use whatever schemes they can in order to marry the man they love, and this, therefore, justifies their actions in that their intentions are morally acceptable. The Sophie of *Le Galant escroc*, on the other hand, admits that she is willing to sleep with the chevalier even though their eventual marriage is not guaranteed; her love for him is so strong that she is willing to give herself to him totally and ignore the consequences. It is the chevalier in fact who is more worried about her reputation and begs her to marry in secret so that she can avoid any scandal should the truth be discovered. A similar role play can be seen in Saurin's *Les Mœurs du temps*, where the female character is once again the more determined and confident:

JULIE: Calmez-vous, Dorante, vous me faites trembler.

Noailles, although the main actors were the duc and his family (Truchet, 1974, p. 1362). Just as in the general consensus among scholars today, Diderot was seen as a theorist and novel writer, rather than a great playwright.

DORANTE: Ah! mademoiselle, ce n'est pas mon intérêt qui m'anime, c'est le vôtre. Si ce mariage faisait votre bonheur, je saurais vous perdre et mourir; mais vous voir indignement sacrifiée... non!
JULIE: Tranquillisez-vous, encore une fois, et soyez sûr qu'il n'y a point de parti que je ne prenne plutôt que d'être au marquis. Je me jetterai aux pieds de mon père, il m'aime... Mais on vient; modérez-vous, de grâce, et rentrons dans la salle du bal concerter ensemble nos mesures.

Saurin, in Truchet, 1974, p. 280.

Saurin, however, was more concerned with advocating marriage as a union of two people in love: the title of the play reveals its moralistic nature. Julie is resourceful, but she does not express the same sexual libertinism as Sophie; Julie's naivety and lack of experience in matters of love is revealed in Scene 2, when she is embarrassed by her aunt's asking whether she is in love (in Truchet, 1974, pp. 265-267). The attitude of the comte in *Le Galant escroc* would equally have been the subject of Saurin's criticism; although Sophie and the chevalier manage to win in the end, the means by which this is achieved is morally dubious.

It seems likely that the name Sophie would be associated with the Sophies of Marivaux's plays, such as *Le Jeu de L'amour et du hasard* and *Les Fausses Confidences*. If one takes the example of *Le Jeu...*, Sophie is portrayed as a young girl determined to follow her father's wishes and marry the man he has chosen. When, mistakenly, she thinks she may not be able to do this, she is in considerable distress. The Sophie of *Le Galant escroc*, however, is a much stronger character, in that she recognizes that she could go against her aunt's wishes and marry the chevalier, but this would mean she would lose her inheritance and so she would not be a good catch for him. The Sophie of *Le Galant escroc* is practical, as well as strong in her love for the chevalier. The portrayal of her character lacks the discretion and delicacy of the Sophies of Marivaux. Scene 8 has some of the trappings of a scene from Marivaux, e.g. the exasperation of the two young lovers who find a barrier in the way of

their love, the desperate outbursts of the chevalier as he suddenly fears that Sophie has changed her mind and no longer wants to marry him. However, the diference in Collé is that he introduces the element of sexual freedom which is totally absent in Marivaux.

The character of Sophie is by no means unique in terms of her devotion and her willingness to sacrifice everything for the man she loves: what differentiates her from other strong female characters is the fact that she is leaving herself open to the gossip of others. Sophie's emancipation could not be given free expression in the royal theatres; her candour would have been deemed too shocking for the public stage. For the private and minor theatres, however, this character would have been accepted: considering the duc's liking for the more vulgar *parades*, the character of Sophie represents a relatively less shocking picture of the *mœurs* of this society.

Length of the comedy

A further point of consideration in the play's suitability for the private theatre is its actual length. Those comedies which contained between three and five acts were used as the main performance of a given evening at any of the public theatres. Comedies of one to three acts were adopted as complements to the main performance. According to Rougemont, this meant that up to four times as many shorter comedies could be written as opposed to longer ones. It was not unusual to have up to as many as seven plays performed in one night at the *forain* and *Boulevard* theatres; a practice which was sometimes adopted by the Comédie-italienne. The length of a play had implications as to its perceived genre: the longer the comedy, the more opportunity the author had to develop the plot and portrayal of character.

The length of *Le Galant escroc* seems to situate it somewhere between the accelerated action of a play suitable as a complement, and a centrepiece for an evening's entertainment. In terms of the plays he wrote for the private

theatre, *Le Galant escroc* is slightly longer, as is *La Vérité dans le vin. La Tête à Perruque* is considerably shorter; it contains nine scenes, some of which only consist of a few lines. This play is accordingly categorized as a *petit conte dramatique* (Collé's categorization), unlike *Le Galant escroc* and *La Vérité...*, which are both labelled *comédies*. Certainly, all three plays have a much more developed scenario than, for example, Carmontelle's *proverbes dramatiques*. However, these plays lack the length of the *haut comique* of Beaumarchais, whose *Le Barbier de Séville, Le Mariage de Figaro* and *La Mère coupable* are of the more habitual length of those comedies deemed suitable for the main performance at the royal theatres. Of course, one cannot dismiss *Le Galant escroc* as being unworthy of public performance simply because of its compactness; the perception of shorter plays was simply a result of what we now term the Classical notions of *haut* and *bas comique*, which the general public still perceived to be valid. In Collé's case, this point is further underlined by the fact that the three plays he presented to the Comédie-française are longer than his *théâtre de société*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *Le Galant escroc* is more developed than the scanty plots of the *parades*, but its length alone would have placed it – somewhat unfairly perhaps – [9] in a less prestigious category.

FEATURES RECURRENT IN OTHER EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PLAYS

The play as a social commentary

The first feature of *Le Galant escroc* which I would like to consider is the possible comments being made by Collé on the structure of this society. To

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[9] Unfair, in the sense that Collé had to consider the fact that the play would be performed by amateurs, who would not always know their lines, and so the actual performance would probably take longer as a result. He had to keep the duc's social circle amused: if the play were too long, they might get restless and be unwilling to spend so much time on one production. As already mentioned, Collé saw this play as being suitable for about three hour's entertainment (See page 125). The likelihood of some improvisation on the actors' part may also have been a determining factor: deviations from the original plot were always a possibility.

begin with, I shall reconsider the portrayal of the *financier* in the play, as the treatment of this character provides a guideline as to the moralistic aims of the author. As I have already discussed the character in some detail in Chapter 3, my concern at this point is more with the degree to which I feel Collé is being judgemental, rather than any further discussion of the *financier*'s actual social position. Secondly, I shall consider whether Collé seems to be judging the *mœurs* of this society in any way: is there a moral behind the story, or are there no conclusions to be drawn from the tale whatsoever?

In order to further the discussion of the portrayal of the *financier* in *Le Galant escroc*, it is perhaps easiest to make a comparison with the comedies of Molière, the last great representative of classical comedy in France, and to trace briefly the development of the comic genre from this time. Although Molière's plays were no longer in vogue at the Comédie-française during the second half of the eighteenth century, his contribution to the comic genre was such that commentators continued to compare contemporary authors with his work. Molière's brand of comedy involved characters who were either anti-social, or simply misfits in society (e.g. *Le Tartuffe*, *Le Misanthrope*). Characterization of the main protagonist was a form of exaggeration; Molière chose to portray traits of character which his audience would associate with certain figures of society: the doctor, the pedant. However, the characters involved would be guilty of letting certain aspects of their personality take over their whole life, and they became *obsédés*. Despite this portrayal of vice and selfishness, the comedy of the plays depended on the essential notion that good would always overcome bad, i.e. the young lovers would thwart the jealous old fool, or those with snobbish attitudes would always be shown in their true light. The correction of vice implies a certain moral position on the part of the author, in that the *mal adaptés* are being exposed to ridicule as a means of making them, and the audience, see the error of their ways.

Critics have long lamented the fact that Molière had no real successors in the early eighteenth century, and that there was little development in the genre of comedy (see, for example, Lanson, 1971, p. 32; Taylor, 1972, p. 1546 and Versini, 1988, p. 27). Molière's impact on French theatre was such that his successors are really seen as pale imitators of a genre already mastered. However, to include Collé – and indeed any of the eighteenth-century playwrights – in this assumption is a gross overstatement. The assumption stems from a consideration of eighteenth-century theatre simply in terms of Classical comedy, the boundaries of which are too limited to incorporate the multi-faceted genre of comedy. Granted, Molière's immediate successors do seem to have adopted the strategy of isolating the deficiencies of certain characters for comic purposes; for example Regnard's *Le Joueur* (1696), Lesage's *Turcaret* (1709) and *Le Glorieux* of Destouches (1732). However, as with the *financier* of *Le Galant escroc*, the comic mechanisms of these plays do not solely depend on the particular deficiencies of one or more of the main characters. What Collé and his predecessors were doing was to adapt their comedy to the changing social structure of the eighteenth century; Collé does not set out to ridicule Gasparin and, as already noted in Chapter 3, his comments on the *financier* do not have the same bitter, satirical notes of Lesage's *Turcaret*. The *financier* in *Le Galant escroc* is, rather, a figure of fun ; we are given some sideways glances into the profession of *financier*, rather than Gasparin being exposed to complete ridicule.

If one looks at the portrayal of Gasparin in a wider sense, it would seem that Collé has chosen a different path from many of his contemporaries. In *Le Galant escroc*, Collé has sidestepped the notions of the *philosophe* movement of the eighteenth century, which painted the trading and financial professions in a much more favourable light. Examples of plays illustrating such notions are Mercier's *La Brouette du vinaigrier*, Sedaine's *Le Philosophe sans le savoir* and Saurin's *Les Mœurs du temps* (the latter two plays enjoying

considerable success at the Comédie-française in the 1760s). *La Brouette du vinaigrier* was published some time after *Le galant escroc* (1775 is the first publication date), but it remains nonetheless a prime example of the general trend in the eighteenth century towards the advocation of bourgeois values. The *négociant* of this play is depicted as a noble man, who is not too proud to accept help from a mere vinegar seller. This is a far cry from the *financier* of *Le Galant escroc*, who, although not ridiculed, remains the object of Collé's little asides. In *Les Mœurs du temps*, the *gens de finance* are actually defended by Dorante in the first scene:

DORANTE: Mais c'est que j'en connais de très estimables, et que, du ridicule de quelques-uns, il n'en faut point faire le ridicule de tous. Aujourd'hui l'on a la fureur de tout blâmer. Une infinité de sots par nature se font méchants par air.

In Truchet, 1974, p. 263.

This is not just the opinion of this particular character; it reflects the attitude of Saurin towards writers of satire, of whom Collé must be considered one, although his treatment of Gasparin is moderate in its criticism. This particular viewpoint is also representative of the *philosophe* notion of greater equality among men of similar moral standards: the professions are no longer seen as being ignoble, and businessmen, if honest, are to be respected for their endeavours.

In *Le Philosophe sans le savoir*, Sedaine's defence of the world of commerce is twofold: firstly, M. Vanderk, although born a noble, has now taken up commerce and is portrayed as an honest, proud man. His sister, on the other hand, is a ridiculous woman who clings deperately to the notions of noblesse. Her snobbish pride leaves her unable to acknowledge her brother; she does not want everyone at his son's wedding to know that she is actually a member of the family. Her attitude changes due to the fact that she obviously finds her nephew attractive:

LA TANTE, *en s'en allant*: Je vois qu'il est heureux, mais très heureux pour mon neveu que je sois venue ici. Vous, mon frère, vous avez perdu toute idée de noblesse, de grandeur; le commerce rétrécit l'âme, mon frère. Ce cher enfant! ce cher enfant! Mais c'est que je l'aime de tout mon cœur.

In Truchet, 1974, p. 550.

The hypocrisy of *la Tante* strengthens the argument against what Sedaine saw as the outmoded notions of the financial professions being unworthy of the *noblesse*. *Le Galant escroc* paints a different picture of the *financier*; the character of Gasparin does not have the psychological depth of Vanderk, and his dubious business dealings paint him as being dishonest, but not in a nasty way. The impish ploys of the comte and his good intentions in trying to help the chevalier mean that he appears the more intelligent, and the more educated man as opposed to the gullible *financier*.

I would now like to consider the portrayal of the *mœurs* and vices of this society in general, and whether there is any moral lesson to be taken from this play. This argument is based, of course, on the assumption that theatre is to be seen as a reflection of everyday life, and has some sort of sociological dimension. As Collé claimed that comedy could only work if the playwright is a good observer of society, it can be assumed that his plays are meant to be a reflection, or at least contain some evidence of the type of attitudes he had witnessed in the society he knew. Is *Le Galant escroc*, therefore, a portrayal of the *mœurs* of this society, or is it criticism of these *mœurs*?

To begin with, I shall consider the moral stance of each of the characters. The chevalier, although rather insipid, is the only one who appears to be trying to adhere to a set of conventional moral standards, i.e. he wants to marry Sophie, and is quite shocked by the comte's suggestion that he has already slept with her. As already discussed, Sophie is the more libertine of the two. The comte is the typical *libertin* in the play; he is the *roué* who will do anything to get what he wants out of life. Mme Gasparin is a trickster, in

that she lies about losing money at cards in order to provide some sort of excuse for asking the comte to give her two thousand francs. Her morals are no better than that of a prostitute, and she has no qualms – at the beginning of the play at least– about committing adultery. Her husband also openly admits to having an affair which, along with the various comments made about his fraudulent business deals, is further proof of his self-centred aims in life.

If *Le Galant escroc* were a condemnation of the apparent lack of conscience and moral fibre of some of the characters, then one would assume that the chevalier would be depicted as the character whose attitude was to be seen as the most commendable. This, however, is not the case. The comte's reaction to the chevalier's obvious distress in Scene two makes a mockery of everything the chevalier says. The following speech, which occurs halfway through Scene two, may be nothing more than a comment on the chevalier's moral reasoning up until that point; however, it could equally be seen as a comment on the moralizing nature of the work of many of Collé's contemporaries:

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Oh! trêve de morale, mon cher ami, l'on a tant vu de cela!

Scene 2.

The chevalier's dream of being able to marry Sophie does come true in the end, but this is due to the comte's intervention, rather than being a reward for the chevalier's moral strength. Debauchery gains the upper hand in this play: the comte gets to sleep with Mme Gasparin, thereby gaining revenge on her husband and helping the chevalier. Sophie is going to be able to marry the man she loves; she is not publicly shamed for her libertine attitudes. Even Gasparin is not punished as such; the comte and Mme Gasparin know what has happened, but Gasparin is perfectly content in his ignorance. He is not publicly humiliated and does not 'suffer' in any sense. Mme Gasparin is made to look a fool in front of the comte, but his scheming is somehow justified by

the fact that she has tried to trick him into giving her money in the first place. If Collé really wanted to denounce her actions, her schemes would surely have been revealed to her husband, and her life would be in ruins. M. and Mme Gasparin are the two characters who receive some sort of punishment in the play, but the fact that they suffer at the hands of the comte means that Collé could be accused of having double standards. The morally good has not won over the morally bad in the play; the saviour of the situation, whatever his motives, is just as corrupt as those upon whom he wants to have revenge.

A conclusion which could be drawn from these arguments is that Collé did not want to denounce the moral depavity of his charaters, but rather created a *comédie de situation* in which the hypocrisy of Mme Gasparin and her dim-witted husband is fully exposed for comic purposes. The most important thing is that Collé has amused his audience; he has not intended his play to be a *comédie de mœurs*. This type of genre is frequently denounced by Collé in his *Journal* as lacking in theatricality; the vogue in the 1750s and 1760s for the *drame* and the *comédie larmoyante* had taken the Comédie-française by storm (precise details of these more 'serious' comedies are provided by Candler Hayes, 1991; Gaiffe, 1971; Lanson, 1971 and Versini, 1988).

As a contrast to Collé's viewpoint in *Le Galant escroc*, one could take the example of some of the authors of *drames* in the second half of the eighteenth century. The most famous exponent of the aims of the *drame* was Diderot, whose plays, as we have already seen, were the subject of harsh criticism from Collé. I shall not go into any great detail about the *drame*, as *Le Galant escroc* does not belong to this genre. However, one could argue that the comte's mockery of the chevalier's attitude towards Sophie in Scene 2 is also a mockery of the typical moralistic characters which might appear in any *drame.* In plays such as *Le Fils naturel* and *Le Père de famille*, the virtues of family ties and of the importance of marriage are extolled to the point that the characters are simply the mouthpiece of the author's moral point of view.

Diderot is distinct from other proponents of the *drame* in the eighteenth century, and it is obvious from the *Journal* that Collé did not rate his theatre very highly. However, this is not a sufficient argument to suggest that *Le Galant escroc* has an underlying criticism of the *drame*. Collé's *Dupuis et Desronais*, and indeed his *La Partie de Chasse de Henri IV* could also be seen as *drames*: when writing for the Comédie-française Collé adopted this type of genre, although the term *drame* encompasses a wide range of plays. What is important, though, is that elements of the *drame* can be identified in the play and this is important for translation purposes; the extent to which the play may be a parody of different genres will be discussed in the points of detail following the translation of the play.

The notion of *sensibilité* in eighteenth-century theatre

The notion of *sensibilité* was adopted by many eighteenth-century authors. The term defines the highly-charged emotions of those characters whose sensitivity and sense of moral duty dictated all their actions. This often led to the character's bursting into tears, or, upon hearing good news, uttering numerous exclamations. The *genre larmoyant* was a popular genre in terms of numbers of performances at the Comédie-française in the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1753, for example, when *Le Galant escroc* was being written, performances of the *comédies moralisantes* of Destouches at the Comédie-française numbered the following: *Le Dissipateur*: 6; *La Force du naturel*: 5; *Le Philosophe marié*: 8 and *Le Triple Mariage*: 7.[10] Collé detested the *comédie larmoyante*, criticizing the feeble attempt of some authors to create a third genre somewhere between comedy and tragedy. He has a particular dislike of Nivelle de La Chaussée, who could be seen as one of the main

[10] Other examples of the *comédie larmoyante* are Piron's *Les Fils ingrats* (1728); Voltaire's *L'Enfant prodigue*(1736) and *Nanine* (1749); Landois' *Silvie ou le jaloux* (1742); Nivelle de la Chaussée's *La Fausse Antipathie* (1733), *Le Préjugé à la mode* (1735); *Mélanide* (1741), *La Gouvernante* (1747) and Mme de Graffigny's *Cénie* (1750).

supporters of the *comédie larmoyante*. The following is a typical comment by Collé on Nivelle de La Chaussée's work:

> Toutes les fables de ses pièces n'ont aucune vraisemblance et ne sont bâties que sur des événements physiquement et moralement impossibles; excepté le *Préjugé à la mode*, aucune de ses pièces n'est écrite; la moitié de ses caractères sont faux et forcés, supposé qu'il y en ait encore; un ton de morale et de pédanterie, que j'aime mieux à la paroisse qu'au théâtre, où l'on imagine pas qu'un prédicateur viendra vous relancer, c'est un guet-apens; enfin, une foiblesse, une médiocrité et une tiédeur qu'Apollon vomira tôt ou tard. Ce petit homme n'est pas fait pour aller à la postérité.
>
> Collé, *Journal* 1, pp. 55-56.

There are, however, some features of *Le Galant escroc* which are reminiscent of the *genre larmoyant*, and it seem likely that the eighteenth-century audience would have picked up on these resonances. For example, in Scene 8, Sophie and the chevalier at times seem driven to the point of despair:

> **SOPHIE**: Non, mon cher Chevalier, vous ne pouvez vivre sans moi; je connais votre cœur... Eh! ne l'éprouvé-je pas par le mien?... Sophie pourrait-elle vivre sans vous?
>
> Scene 8.

At other points, they rejoice in their love for one another:

> **LE CHEVALIER**, *avec transport*: Quelle âme! quelle force! quelle dignité! quelle vérité dans le caractère! Ah! vous me pénétrez d'amour et d'admiration![11]
>
> Scene 8.

Such noble emotions, however, are combined with the full reality of the situation: Sophie and the chevalier are simply discussing whether they should sleep with one another even though they may not get Mme Gasparin's consent to marry. Although this play is not a full parody of the *genre*

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11 Compare with the following description of by Dominique fils of the woman he loves in Mercier's *La Brouette du vinaigrier*: "Si vous saviez comme elle pense, comme elle s'exprime, quelle noblesse de sentiment, quelle sensibilité inépuisable pour les malheureux, quelle honnêteté touchante règne dans toutes ses actions!" (In Truchet, 1974, p. 910.)

larmoyant, it is impossible to take this scene seriously as the hyperbole and emotive language are not in accordance with what is really happening.

Another aspect of the *genre larmoyant* is the final scene, which can sometimes take the form of a recognition scene, or a form of reconciliation with a happy ending. The chevalier and Sophie make the expected exclamations which are typical of a *scène de tendresse*:

LE CHEVALIER: Ah, madame, que de remerciements!
SOPHIE: Ah, ma tante, que de grâces!
Scene 14.

However, the young lovers' gushing is quickly cut short by M. Gasparin:

GASPARIN, *d'un air de bonhomie*: En voilà assez, mes enfants.
Scene 14.

Some of the language may be typical of a *scène de tendresse*, but this is certainly not the usual happy ending of a play: the audience knows that Gasparin has been duped, the comte is a liar and a cheat, Mme Gasparin has been humiliated and the relationship between Sophie and the chevalier was hardly innocent from the beginning. What is happening in *Le Galant escroc* is that Collé is using the form of the *genre larmoyant* at times, but the content of the speeches does not have the noble intentions to match. Criticism of the *genre larmoyant* is not, however, the main force behind the comedy; use of these conventions adds an ironic twist to the characters' speeches, as there is much hidden behind what they actually say. A similar mechanism in the play is the language of *galanterie* which is adopted in particular by Mme Gasparin and the comte in Scene 6. The audience is fully aware that the comte is plotting some sort of scheme against Mme Gasparin, and does not believe her story about how she lost money playing cards. Mme Gasparin makes a basic proposition to the comte: if he agrees to giving her two thousand francs, she will sleep with him. Yet on the surface, this scene has the characters

appearing as courting lovers, following all the normal rules of *bienséance*.[12] The comte's 'Je raffole de vous...' does act as a signpost; it is rather forward, which reminds the audience of the true relationship between them. The plot of *Le Galant escroc* revolves around the idea of the mask: both in the comte's hidden agenda as he seduces Mme Gasparin, and in that the characters – with the exception perhaps of Gasparin – at times hide behind language to veil their immoral motives.

The *vaudeville*

The *vaudeville* at the end of the play deserves special comment, as this is a recurrent feature in many eighteenth-century texts. The *vaudeville* of *Le Galant escroc* is revealing of the attitudes towards love and relationships of the different characters in the play. The first verse sung by the chevalier shows his idyllic view of the woman he loves, and his yearning to be with her every moment of the day. The poeticism, however, stops here, as Gasparin's second verse is an ode to the seductive power of the comte, and to the woman who was so generous as to return his money. The third verse belongs to Sophie, reaffirming her belief that a young girl should give herself completely to her lover if she knows he is honest and faithful in return. Mme Gasparin then gets a chance to comment on the comte's deceitfulness in verse 4, and his ability to 'tromper toutes les femmes tour à tour'. The comte then has the final say, claiming how love is really all about having lots of lovers and being constantly unfaithful. The *vaudeville* thus blatantly states the attitudes of the different characters; there is no longer any hiding behind the language of *galanterie*, or any apparent need to keep up appearances. Such statements would not have been permitted at the Comédie-française; the degree of

[12] The question of whether some of the comte's expressions are overly exaggerated will be discussed in the decisions of detail following the translation of the play. The audience is fully aware of the comte's hypocrisy, but the actual language may be no different from the expected norm between lovers.

licentiousness would have been considered unacceptable for public performance.

The *vaudeville* is not only a feature typical of the *parade* or of *théâtre de société*. Its vogue was such in the 1750s in particular that it was adopted by some of the authors whose plays were destined for the royal theatres. Music was an integral part of theatrical entertainment; it was not considered as a feature only worthy of *le bas comique*. Favart's *L'Anglais à Bordeaux*, for example, ends with a *ronde* and a *vaudeville* of some eleven verses. This play, first performed at the Comédie-française on 14 March 1763, had been commissioned by the French foreign affairs minister to commemorate the signing of the Paris treaty in February of the same year, which heralded a period of peace between the English and the French. This was then to be a national play, but it was also a *divertissement* – otherwise, claims Truchet, the authorities would not have asked someone of Favart's reputation to write the play (Truchet, 1974, p. 1421). The play is patriotic, in the sense that it portrays the generosity of a Frenchman towards his English counterpart. The seduction of the young English girl, Clarice, by the Frenchman Darmant also serves to illustrate the *galanterie* of the French nation, whose attitude to love is more liberal than the less expressive English characters in the play. The *vaudeville* itself celebrates the signing of peace between the two nations, but also has a degree of licentiousness in some of the verses. For example, in the following verse, adultery is described as a matter of course between husband and wife:

> Un mari pour une grisette
> Néglige sa moitié;
> Sa femme, tant soit peu coquette,
> A fait une amitié.
> De part et d'autre l'on se prête,
> On n'approfondit point les faits.
> Eh! paix, etc. In Truchet, 1974, p. 415.

The inclusion of a *vaudeville* seems to give the authors concerned more freedom to express an opinion on matters which were considered delicate, or even taboo in the private theatres. *Le Galant escroc* is no different in that respect, but its *vaudeville* quite unashamably expresses the libertinism of the characters, and makes no apology for their attitude. Favart's aim with his *vaudeville* is to applaud the frank nature of relationships in France, as opposed to the colder English attitude: the English characters in the play are given to understand the generous, galant nature of the noble Frenchman. The words are not to be taken too seriously, just as Clarice is seen throughout the play to judge French *mœurs* too harshly.

A similar *vaudeville* to that of *Le Galant escroc* appears in Saurin's *Les Mœurs du temps*. The content is similar, in so far as different attitudes to love are expressed: that of the *coquette*, the *petit-maître*, the young and the *philosophe*. However, the song is a general comment on certain types, and has a moralizing aspect which is missing in that of Collé. The last two verses are the author's personal comment on the lack of moral standards in France, and the particular role of the theatre:

> Aimer et l'honneur et son roi,
> Être en amour léger, sans foi,
> Ridiculiser la constance,
> Sybarite ensemble et soldat,
> Du plaisir voler au combat:
> Ce sont là les mœurs de la France.
>
> Ce temps dont nous peignons les mœurs
> N'abonde que trop en censeurs;
> Aux nouveautés ils font la guerre.
> Mais moins sévères qu'indulgents,
> Vous encouragez les talents:
> Ce sont là les mœurs du parterre.
>
> In Truchet, 1974, p. 284.

The difference, therefore, between the *vaudeville* of *Le Galant escroc* and those of plays considered suitable for the Comédie-française is the message behind the song; the *vaudevilles* of *L'Anglais à Bordeaux* and of *Les Mœurs du temps* do deal with the same theme, but the authors' intentions act as a shield against any real criticism of moral depravity.

To sum up, *Le Galant escroc* could be described as a hybrid genre, with certain features which are resonant in other eighteenth-century plays. It is most definitely *théâtre de société*, in that its themes and some of its language would have been deemed unsuitable for the French stage. Collé seems to have found a little niche of his own in a century in which so many changing attitudes were being expressed; he does not favour the *philosophes*, or pander to the cries of an audience which was looking to more serious comedies as a new genre. Collé's aim was to entertain a social group which he knew well, challenging the conventions of the royal theatres, the plays of which he considered at times to be repressive. *Le Galant escroc* is a *comédie de situation*; it is not meant to be regarded as a warning to those wives committing adultery, or a vicious satire of the fraudulent dealings of *financiers*. The combination of debauchery and *galanterie*, however, gives the actors wide scope as to how to play the scenes, as will be the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

6

Strategic Decisions for a Translation of the Play

The strategy I propose to adopt for a translation of *Le Galant escroc* will be based on the material outlined in the first five chapters, and my own detailed reading of the play. For several reasons, the source text presents a number of strategic challenges: it was written over two hundred years ago; it is a written text designed for oral purposes within a specific setting; and the play is a hybrid of genres, as discussed in Chapter 5. My strategy, while coherent, will necessarily comprise a variety of approaches to the issue of word-for-word translation. The first section of this chapter will be an outline of this complex approach to translating the play. I shall then situate my approach with reference to that of modern translation theorists whose work I have found relevant.

TRANSLATION STRATEGY

The intended medium

One of the first considerations is the medium I am translating for; compared with what was available to the eighteenth-century writer or translator of texts, the choice of media is extremely varied. As the intention is to produce a translation for performance purposes, rather than a written script for individual reading, I shall consider three main options which are open to me: radio, television, and the theatre.

It would be quite plausible to translate with a radio reading in mind; the reading of foreign works in translation is adopted by such stations as Radio 4, for example. However, a radio performance would perhaps not exploit the dramatic irony of some of the scenes to greatest effect. The difference between what the characters say to one another, and their true intentions depends – to a certain degree – on the facial expressions of the

characters and their physical movements on stage. The visual effect of the comte's sneaking glances and Mme Gasparin's obvious discomfort in scene 10, for example, are an integral part of the comedy of this play. Although tone of voice can convey a lot of hidden meanings, there is much more scope for comedy in seeing the reactions on the characters' faces.

The option of having the actors in period costume also becomes irrelevant during a radio performance; any notion of the drama unfolding in eighteenth-century France would depend on idiom alone. Costume is a striking reminder to the audience of the setting and period in question, as is discussed in more detail on pp. 173-174.

Television would seem to be a better choice of medium, as it is capable of offering the full visual effect to the audience. However, there are certain impracticalities which a translator may have to face when producing a translation for a television performance, as outlined by John Croyston in a paper entitled *The Emperor's New Clothes* (1984). Considering the fact that Collé is not a well-known author to a contemporary audience, it would be difficult to entice viewers to watch the play. Although the same could be said for any translation of Collé in whatever medium, television is perhaps the most competitive market in its attempts to attract audiences. Croysten claims that viewers are only likely to watch a play on television if they know the actors and actresses concerned, and even then, more viewers will choose to watch the soap opera or film on the other channel. Viewers will be sitting with remote control in hand, ready to switch channels if what they are watching does not command their attention straightaway. Croyston actually feels that this has deflated the role of drama in television nowadays:

> The narrowing of range has virtually confined drama to a form of naturalism, where the experiences of 'everyday reality' are acted out, where the patina of that reality is reflected.
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> Croysten, in Zuber (ed.), p. 88, 1984.

Financial considerations aside, however, a television performance obviously would have a number of advantages. It allows for a speedy change between scenes, and the camera can also focus on one character, and then very quickly on another. You can move from one room to another in a split second; and even from one country to another. However, such advantages would not necessarily apply to this particular play. The whole performance could be staged in one room only, which means the action is fast-moving, as there is no real need to change scenery. If my intention were to add more scenes to the play then perhaps a television performance would be more appropriate. For example, it would be possible to add in another scene at the point where the comte and Mme Gasparin disappear into her boudoir, as we could see glimpses of their lovemaking while Gasparin is explaining to the chevalier and Sophie in Scene 9 that his wife is a *madame honesta*. However, my intention is not to emphasize the sexual intrigue the play, as I feel the beauty of the plot lies in what the audience knows is happening behind the scenes; the focus is more on the language, and the irony of what is happening in reality. I envisage the whole play being performed in one room on stage. This recreates the sense of intimacy which would have been possible in a private theatre. A television performance where there is no change of scene could possibly seem very confined.

The obvious conclusion, then, is that the theatre is the best medium for the play. It is impossible to assess the atmosphere of an eighteenth-century private theatre, but it seems fair to conclude that a smaller theatre would go some way to recreating a sense of intimacy between actors and audience. As mentioned before, facial expressions, and empathy between the audience and the characters are essential elements of this play. Each member of the audience would have a good view of the stage, and could clearly see the odd wry smile or look of panic on the actors' faces. Audience participation is not just important, it is essential to the success of this play. The comte, for

example, uses the audience as a confidant; we laugh with him, and enjoy his success at getting his own way. Collé's intention was to let his audience have a glimpse into the private lives of these characters; the immediacy of a theatre performance is inviting, as the audience is in the privileged position of being aware of all the characters' different sides to their personality.

A performance-based translation

As mentioned above, my intention is to produce a workable script, with a theatre performance in mind. A translation intended for performance purposes brings several elements into play which the translator would not necessarily have to consider when producing a translation for a reading audience only. Reba Gostand refers to the complexities involved in translating drama in a study entitled *Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Drama as Translation* (in Zuber, 1980). The following quotation sums up the differing levels of interpretation which the translator of drama faces:

> Drama, as an art-form, is a constant process of translation: from original concept to script (where there is one), to producer/director's interpretation, to contribution by designer and actor/actress, to visual and/or aural images to audience response [...] these are only the most obvious stages (no pun intended) in the process. At every stage there may be a number of subsidiary processes of translation at work.
>
> Gostand, in Zuber (ed.), p.1, 1980.

The success of my translation does not depend simply on whether I have adequately translated the lexical meaning of the words; I must always keep in mind how the text will be spoken, and in a sense channel the interpretation of the actors, director and audience, who are the 'readers' of my translation. What may look fine on the page, for example, may not always work in performance. I have to avoid tongue-twisters and lines which may prove

difficult for the actor to say, particularly if it results in shortage of breath.[1] Not only would the actor have difficulties pronouncing the line, the audience may also miss what has been said. My target audience does not have the same amount of time to absorb everything in the script as a reading audience; they are not in the position of being able to reread the scene if they do not understand a particular line or reference. Consequently, ambiguities must be eliminated where they might possibly occur; one of my main concerns, therefore, is with the actability of the text.

A further performance-related element is the length of the speech compared with the movement of the actors on stage. Although Collé does not give many indications in the form of stage directions, what the characters actually say at times suggests the way they are standing, or some form of movement. I have to be aware of the hidden stage directions in the play, and make sure that the length of speech corresponds accordingly. In a more general sense, it may be the case that the English version is more concise than the French, given the nature of English language constructions. Although this may not be a problem overall, it is important that the audience still has time to absorb everything which is being said. The humour of the play depends on innuendo; it is vitally important in some scenes that the audience has time to take in one speech and laugh or smile at it, before having to give their attention to the next.[2]

The response of the audience to this play is a vital consideration for my translation. Collé has adopted the convention of the monologue, and also has the characters making various asides, directing comments to the audience which the other characters on stage are not supposed to hear. Both these

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[1] A complex sentence, or phrase which sounds complicated may, of course, fit a particular purpose in the play. For example, the chevalier's language in Scene 2 comes across as being flowery in comparison with the comte's, and at times he gets rather flustered. Having him pronounce rather awkward sentences may be a means of highlighting the difference between his lack of eloquence and the comte's obvious self-confidence.

[2] This point is taken up again under the heading of 'stage directions', pp. 170-172.

aspects of the play deliberately break the illusion of theatre; the audience is not only witnessing the action, but is also hearing the thoughts of characters such as the comte and Mme Gasparin in particular. One option is that I could produce a translation which presents the plot in a more realistic way; for example, rather than having the comte talk to himself (and to the audience) in the opening scene, I could indicate that he is talking to the chevalier at this earlier point, which means there is no need for the chevalier to be introduced in Scene 2.[3] However, I see no need to rationalize the play to this extent. The monologues and asides are potential sources of humour, and the fact that they also remind the audience that they are watching a play, and nothing more reflects the illusion that is theatre, as mentioned above. I shall take the author's intentions into account up to a certain point in my translation, in so far as they can be determined (as I shall discuss at a later point in this chapter). Although Collé wanted to paint a picture of the social circle he knew best, his main concern was with entertaining his audience. The asides and the monologues are part of the theatricality of the play; to remove them, or substitute them would diminish the vital role which the audience has to play.

A further consideration in terms of writing a play with a performance in mind is the actual length of time that the play will run for. According to Collé, a performance of the play lasted for three to four hours (for the relevant quotation, see p. 125). To a contemporary reader of the play, this seems nigh on impossible; it seems more likely that the play would last for an hour, or one and a quarter hours. However, consideration of the circumstances in which the play was first performed reveals several reasons why this might have been the case. The private theatres of the eighteenth century cannot possibly be compared with a stage performance of the play in the twentieth century. Firstly, the actors concerned were amateurs, and it seems likely that

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[3] The difference between the way the comte and the chevalier address one another when they first meet is also important at the beginning of Scene 2. See Points of Detail for further comments.

some of them would not have known their lines. In Collé's time, the play was acted out for the amusement of a small social gathering; if they got tired, they could easily take a break and resume the acting at a later point in the evening. There may have been people present who did not have a part to play; however, the actors were usually part of the same social circle, and so participation was all part of the evening's entertainment. The scope for improvisation may also have added to the actual performance time, depending on any scandal which the actors might have wanted to refer to. The question for me as a translator is whether I wish to lengthen the play as a consequence: would this be a better reflection of how the play was seen by its contemporaries?

Given the difference in context between an eighteenth-century performance of the play, and the type of performance I envisage nowadays, I do not feel it is necessary for me to add scenes to make the performance time longer.[4] My target audience is not the same: my translation is a script for actors whose main intention is to entertain others by giving a performance of the play as it stands. The audience I have in mind is a separate entity to the actors involved in the production. The shortness of the play also adds further weight to my argument that there is no serious delving into character psychology in this play; there is not enough time to get to know the various personalities in any great detail, and there is no need for the audience to know more about them. The play is entertainment first and foremost; the action is fast and the emphasis in the play is on how quickly the comte manages to get the better of Mme Gasparin and her dim-witted husband.

Although the end result I am hoping to achieve with my translation is a workable script, the layout of the text in print is still an important

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[4] It is also a matter of what material I would use to pad out the play. This calls into question a number of translation theories centring around the role which the original author has to play. Should I be faithful to the original author's work, and not add extra material? A number of arguments exist as to how much the original author's intentions should be taken into account when translating his work. Some of these theories are outlined on pages185-189.

consideration. The way the words are written down on a page influences the actor as to how he is to speak the lines; something as simple as dividing a speech into two parts with the turning of a page may lead the actor to think that there is a pause at that point. The question also arises as to whether to adopt the French convention of indicating a change of scene each time a character exits or enters. To have the play as a complete scene, or one act only, is perhaps too much for the reader of the text (i.e. the actor) to take in. As they stand, the divisions into fourteen scenes are good markers of change of tone, and considering the hybrid nature of the play's genre, I feel it is best to retain this particular convention. I will be making it clear in the finished script that this is a translation from a French text, and I also want to give some impression of eighteenth-century France. Keeping the original scene headings is, therefore, not out of keeping with my final intentions. There are also no scenes in the play which are ridiculously short, i.e. lasting one or two lines. The British actor will hopefully not find the scene divisions arbitrary; they act as natural divisions in the overall action of the play.

The target audience

Before considering Collé's aims and intentions, I would like to establish my particular aims in translating the play. I am aiming to attract an audience which knows something about eighteenth-century France, or is at least interested in going to see a play which has been translated from an original French text. In other words, I do not intend to transpose the text into modern-day Britain. In terms of audience figures, this obviously has limitations, as the man in the street is not necessarily going to be interested in paying to see something which may not hold any interest for him. One of the problems is that Collé is an unknown author; more people would recognize the name Molière for example, just as the French public in general might recognize the name Shakespeare. However, I do not see it as *essential* that my target

audience knows something about eighteenth-century France; the plot of *Le Galant escroc*, and the image of the lovable rogue may attract a bigger audience. The recent film production of *Les Liaisons dangereuses* enjoyed a huge amount of success at the cinema in Britain; this film did much to promote the image of eighteenth-century literature as being entertaining for today's public. *Dangerous Liaisons* is a title which sounds exciting, and perhaps was familiar to many people, even though they would not have known the orginal novel, or indeed known who the author was. In a similar way, the translation of the title *Le Galant escroc* is going to be extremely important. The title has to convince an audience that the play is worth going to see; if a literal translation into English does not sound particularly appealing, it is surely acceptable to change the original title.[5]

As mentioned previously, I am rejecting the idea of transposing the play into modern-day Britain; I do not want to disassociate the plot from the eighteenth-century French background, as so much of the humour depends on the relationship between the *financier* and the nobility, and the particular atmosphere of the century of libertinism in France. To transpose the play to a modern setting with modern-day slang would surely reduce the play to its basic plot, turning it into nothing more than a bedroom farce. Granted, if this play were a *parade*, such a strategy might be in keeping with its basic humour. However, as pointed out in Chapter 5, this play is more than a mere farce; Collé makes the distinction between *Le Galant escroc* and his previous *parades*. To reduce the play to its basic plot would be to completely ignore the culture and *mœurs* of this society, losing the very essence of the original play.

The means by which I intend to give the audience an impression of eighteenth-century French society in my translated version are varied,

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[5] If I am to change the original title completely I must justify my choice, as it is important that Collé has used the comte as the subject of the title. My arguments for changing the title are outlined in the first Point of Detail following the translation.

involving aspects such as costume, scenery and language.[6] My intention is to retain a certain amount of exoticism in my translation, although I do not want to exaggerate the fact that the characters are supposed to be French. By this, I mean that the suggestion is not that the characters should assume French intonation when speaking their lines, to make them sound like foreigners putting on a performance for the benefit of the British public. I fear this would turn the production into a farce, resembling the B.B.C. comedy *Allo, Allo*. My intention is, rather, to have a number of lexical markers in the translation; this could be achieved by sometimes having the characters address one another as Madame and Monsieur, for example.[7] The original French names could also be used; the British public would recognize 'Gasparin' as being a French-sounding name, and know enough about French culture to accept such lexical markers. It would be a different matter if I were translating a text from a language which was totally unfamiliar to the majority of the British public.

The notion of equivalence is called into question when considering my target audience. As outlined in Chapter 5, this play is not pornographic by eighteenth-century standards, but would certainly not have been considered suitable for the public stage. Trying to recreate an equivalent degree of licentiousness is surely an impossible task, as one cannot gauge the reaction of a particular eighteenth-century audience to this play, and then try to work out how an audience – or indeed any individual – will react to my translation. One cannot use the argument that because the original play was published, it was acceptable to the general public at the time: the system of censorship had so many loopholes that it would have been possible for Collé's work to get past the censors. The degree of licentiousness attributed to most plays destined for private theatres is, of course, an important consideration for my

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[6] These notions are discussed in greater detail at a further point in the chapter; my intention here is simply to outline my basic strategy.

[7] My reading of eighteenth-century English plays has shown that it was quite normal for characters to address one another as Madame and Monsieur, so this feature is also in keeping with a dated English text.

translation of the play. However, would the attitudes of the various characters shock any audience today? The answer is probably no; the portrayal of adultery on stage is commonplace, and the advent of television has meant that a contemporary audience has been exposed to vices which might have been hitherto deemed unsuitable for portrayal in public. If our expectations are different nowadays, should I try to adjust the translation to emphasize the sexual debauchery and lies of the characters? If I had decided to set the play in modern-day times, the perhaps this would be an acceptable, if not necessary solution. However, if the audience knows they are being presented with a picture from the past, they are more likely to accept the lack of explicit detail in the play. The underlying hint of vice is a mechanism of the humour in the play; just as Collé's play was meant to be suggestive, but not coarse, I am aiming for a similar tone in my translation.

As a final point in this section, I shall consider the possibility of being able to play on the conventions of theatre which my target audience will recognize. For example, a British audience can associate certain features which make up 'character parts'. Gasparin, as being greedy and money-grabbing, could be played by someone who is overweight, and perhaps red in the face. I think this image would work very well, particularly if the comte in comparison is slim and handsome. The comte, as the lovable rogue, could also have a black moustache. However, although it might be an appropriate image to have the comte twirling his moustache as he cooks up his plan, I think this has connotations of a pantomine image, which is not the type of picture I have in mind. If I am to indicate precise details of how the characters look, I am playing the role perhaps of the casting director; whether this is an acceptable strategy or not will be discussed in the light of modern translation theory, in the second section of this chapter.

Consideration of the author's aims and intentions

Although it could be argued that it is impossible to assess Collé's aims in writing the play – he is, after all, no longer here to give his opinion – his diary provides some insight into his writing, and the background material discussed in the first five chapters enables me to assess, to a certain extent, his audience and how he wanted them to react. The question of whether the author's aims are relevant in doing any translation will be examined at a later point in this chapter; but concerning my strategies for a translation of this play, I shall be working on the basis that Collé's aims ought to be taken into account.

Chapter 2 highlighted the different atmosphere of the private theatres of the eighteenth century, in comparison with the public theatres. Knowing that Collé wrote *Le Galant escroc* with a private theatre performance in mind, this enables me to assess his aims, or at least consider how this may have affected his approach to writing this particular comedy. Collé is not faced with the constraints imposed by the royal theatre censors, nor does he have to consider the often extravagant wishes of the Comédie-française actors. Granted, he is still catering for a particular audience; it is the duc, however, whom Collé has to please and at this point in his career he is confident of the duc's support. As is reflected in the quotation from his *Journal* on pp. 56-57, Collé took great pleasure in writing for the duc's social circle, although his frequent editing of his plays (and indeed of his *Journal*) still show his tendency towards perfectionism as far as his writing is concerned. The duc's private theatre was like the elite version of the *forain* theatres, providing his friends with an alternative to the more staid repertories of the royal theatres. In this sense, Collé's theatre is more relaxed; the author is not setting out to instruct, or to preach to his audience. The emphasis in this play is on theatricality. The following quotation from Gaiffe sums up what Collé achieved through his *théâtre de société*:

> L'auteur sera plus libre encore et le portrait plus sincère, si la pièce est destinée à un théâtre de société: les pochades libertines de Collé nous en disent plus long sur la corruption de la Cour que toutes les tirades vertueuses des moralistes bourgeois [...] C'est que là, l'auteur s'est simplement proposé de regarder attentivement et de peindre en toute sincérité ce qu'il avait vu, non de moraliser envers et contre tous.
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> Gaiffe, 1971, pp. 397-398.

As Collé was not concerned with moralizing, he was able to concentrate on the theatricality of the play, which was something he saw lacking in the work of many authors who wrote plays for performance in the royal theatres (see, for example, his attack on Diderot as illustrated in Chapter 5, p. 129.) Collé shows throughout his *Journal* great concern for *vraisemblance* in the theatre; the emphasis in his plays is most definitely on theatricality. A translation which concentrates on sounding plausible in English, rather than an interlineal translation, would surely be a reflection of the play's success in terms of this theatricality.[8]

The distinction Collé makes in his *Journal* between his earlier *parades* and plays such as *Le Galant escroc* also has implications for translation. Although the play seems at first reading to be rather superficial, there are many hidden comments about the social structure and the mores of this society. Collé may not have set out to moralize, but the little asides and the lack of blatancy do establish this play as being more than a piece of light-hearted entertainment. My intention is not to produce a translation which turns the play into a mere farce; it is a matter of trying to reproduce the subtlety in the language, juxtaposed with the underlying sexual connotations. My choice of idiomatic phrases, therefore, is particularly important; none of the characters uses vulgar expressions, although there is a distinction between the chevalier's flowery language of Scene 2, and the comte's blatant questions.

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[8] A translation strategy based on literalism, as opposed to free translation, is discussed in the second section of this chapter on pp. 178-181.

This distinction must also be evident in my translation, as it is an important element of the characterization of the comte and the chevalier.

A feature of any text which presents a difficulty to the translator is the author's use of satire. Collé does claim in his *Journal* that his intention is not to satirize any individual; however, the hybrid nature of the text does reveal features of other genres, as discussed in Chapter 5. The question for me as a translator is whether I want to take these features into account.[9] Collé's audience in the eighteenth century would have a clearer understanding of the language he was using, and whether this was, in fact, a parody of other types of play. I believe this is an important feaure of the text to be reflected in translation where possible; for example, the seduction scene between Mme Gasparin and the comte is distinctive, in that their language is that of *galanterie*. It is quite possible in English to make a distinction in tone at this point, and perhaps draw on the wealth of poetic clichés which would be a further indication of how both characters hide behind their words. To sum up, I would say that where my target audience would recognize a shift in tone, and realize the irony of the language, I should try to recreate some sort of equivalent effect to the original text.

One aspect of the original text which is impossible to analyse is the extent to which the audience could recognize any of their acquaintances in the portrayal of characters in the play. The audience was like a microcosm of those members of the upper classes who attended the public theatres. Just as the Comédie-française audience saw the plight of Necker in the character of Sully in *La Partie de chasse de Henri IV*, the public theatre audience would make connections and see allusions to people they knew in the play.

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[9] Collé's dislike of the *genre larmoyant* is revealed through what he says in his diaries: does this mean the play should be seen as a direct criticism of the *larmoyant*, and the language of my translation should reflect this? I think this is too much of an assumption to make; Collé may have disliked the general trend in French theatre, but there is certainly nothing in *Le Galant escroc* to suggest that I should exaggerate the strains of the *larmoyant* in order to make the audience assume that it is harsh criticism, rather than playful parody of the genre.

Although this did not necessarily have to be intentional on the author's part, it is a response to the play which my target audience would not be aware of. The circumstances have now changed; the translation does not portray their society. If I had chosen to transpose the play into the twentieth century, I could perhaps have used the names of politicians, or alluded in some way to public figures. However, I feel that any allusions the audience might, or might not have made then, are now lost to my target audience. Even if I could tell for sure whether the audience made a connection to a certain person or not, it is impossible to try to recreate the same atmosphere as the feeling of collusion which must have affected the source audience.

Consideration of the author's intentions also calls into question the portrayal of the characters in terms of their social status, in particular the *financier*. There is no doubt that Collé was familiar with the business matters of the *hommes de finance*; his involvement with the *sous-fermes* (as explained in Chapter 1, pp. 12-13) would have brought him into contact with such powerful men as Gasparin. However, Collé's involvement with the *fermes* also suggests that he is not likely to overstep the mark and satirize the *financiers*; [10] his desperation to gain some income from the *fermes* is obvious from his repeated cries of distress in his *Journal* (for example *Journal* 1, p 30.) It is also likely that the duc's social circle included some *financiers*, and their wives: Collé would not want to insult the duc's guests, as this might have caused the duc to withdraw his financial support.

The conclusions about the *financier* in Chapter 3 highlight Gasparin's ambiguous social status in the play; although his influence and wealth place him on an equal social footing to the comte, he is not one of the *noblesse de race*. There is a distinction to be made between Gasparin and the comte, in

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[10] Lesage's portrayal of the *homme de finance* in *Turcaret* did overstep the mark, so to speak. Such was the general outcry among the *financiers* after the first performance of the play at the Comédie-française in 1709, that the play was withdrawn by the theatre authorities (see Lawrenson, 1969, pp. 14-22).

terms of the great importance placed on ancestry in this century. The nobility was still considered to be elite, even though their dwindling fortunes meant that the family name was the only thing which was left to them. As pointed out in Chapter 3, p. 96, Gasparin is not portrayed as a bumbling idiot. However, the various comments made about him by the comte, and the slight difference in register between Gasparin's language and that of the other characters reveals Gasparin to be lacking in certain social graces.

There are several ways in which I intend to reflect Gasparin's inferior status in the play. To make the audience immediately aware of the difference between the comte and Gasparin in terms of their knowledge of social graces and good taste, I could give directions as to how the characters should be dressed. This is something which is will be discussed further under the heading of *Costume, scenery and lighting*. Choice of vocabulary will also be an important guide to the characters' social status; Gasparin's outbursts and use of expletives such as *la peste* must be reflected by a similar change in register in the translation. As Gasparin is the only character whose language is so colourful, and less calculated than the others, suitable idiomatic phrases must be used in English to show his inability to remain aloof, unlike the comte, for example. The comte always knows how to react calmly in any given situation in the play. He is very much in control of his own emotions; even when he is discussing his conquest with Gasparin in Scene 10, his careful choice of vocabulary not only saves Mme Gasparin from having to admit everything, it also shows his ability to play the part of the gentleman, and not reveal his lover's identity.

Having established in Chapter 3 that Gasparin is portrayed as a corrupt official, yet his character is by no means as dishonest and nasty as Lesage's Turcaret, my translation strategy must try to accommodate this dual aspect of his character. The fact that Collé did not use a pejorative term to describe him suggests that we are not to judge him too harshly. Translation of

the term *financier* poses a particular problem, mainly because the audience will not be aware of what his job actually entailed, or the implications this had on his relationship with the other characters in the play. To keep the word *financier*, with the French pronunciation, therefore, would possibly confuse the audience even more. The English word financier also has different connotations, and does not reflect Gasparin's true profession. The best option seems to be the inclusion of a brief summary of Gasparin's profession at the beginning of the play, indicating his wealth and his ambiguous social status. Although he is not simply a tax farmer, I felt this was the best term to describe him in the play: it has connotations of someone unpopular (just as the taxman has in English today), and it also has connotations of someone who exploits his victims.

A further means of indicating Gasparin's greed is to suggest in the character list that he is overweight, and perhaps red-faced. This could be seen as another means of compensating for the fact that my target audience will not immediately associate the notion of greed – or indeed of affluence – with an eighteenth-century tax official, whereas a character's physical appearance carries with it stereotypical associations.

The conclusions about the other characters in Chapter 3 also have certain implications for translation. The fact that the chevalier is more or less penniless, yet of noble birth, suggests that his character is not supposed to be pompous. He is naive, and certainly there is room for humour in the comparison between his flowery language and indignant attitude in Scene 3, compared with the comte's down-to-earth approach to relationships.

Mme Gasparin is quite different from her husband; she is more than a match for the comte. Although I imagine her to be a stocky woman, I do not see this as a necessary characteristic. The comparison between her and the Mme Patin of *Le Chevalier à la mode* shows how she is not ridiculed by Collé in the play; she is just as clever as the comte, but he has managed to get the

better of her this time. The stigma attached to the *financier* as being corrupt, and lacking in social graces, certainly does not apply to her. To this end, I do not intend to have Madame Gasparin portayed as gauche. Her clothes should be expensive-looking, and I do not feel the need to show any apparent lack of taste on her part. Her language should also reflect her awareness of *galanterie* and social etiquette, as will be discussed at a later point in this chapter.

Collé's *Journal* contains few references as to how he saw the tone of *Le Galant escroc*; however, the few references which are there are important in assessing the tone of the play as Collé intended it to be. The fact that Gasparin is the one character who is less dignified than the others is corroborated by the quotation cited in Chapter 5, p. 125 (*Journal* 3, p. 131). This quotation also underlines the fact that Collé saw the characters as being true to life; this is a valid argument for suggesting that the emphasis should be on playability in the target text. The audience is supposed to believe that these characters exist, and so rather than translating word for word, my translation should take into account the sense of the text and the plausibility of the speeches in English.

The same quotation also further illustrates the force of Scene 8, where Sophie and the chevalier discuss the problems they face in wanting to stay together. This quotation, along with a further comment in *Journal* 1, pp. 387-388 (as cited in Chapter 1, p. 15), suggests that Collé saw this scene as being a tender moment in the play between the two young lovers. However, it would be difficult to portray this scene as a touching moment in my target text. To begin with, the introduction of the chevalier in Scene 2 presents him as being naive, and over-emotional. Sophie is the character who seems stronger in this scene; the chevalier continues to be rather melodramatic. Today's audience would be more likely to see him as pathetic and weak, whereas by eighteenth-century standards, the chevalier would have been seen as an *âme sensible*, despite his apparent naivety. This is one point where I feel the author's true intentions will be lost to my target audience. Having said that, I believe there

is something to be gained from knowing Collé's aim behind writing this scene. The natural exuberance of the two young lovers could be expresed physically in this scene, i.e. the two young lovers have the chance to be alone, and could be fondling one another on stage as they declare their true love. This would certainly reflect the underlying sexual tones, as Sophie is admitting to the chevalier that she is prepared to sleep with him. However, to take this image too far would disrupt the balance of the play. It is the comte and Mme Gasparin who have no qualms about sleeping with one another; the chevalier's more idealized view of Sophie further emphasizes the roguish attitude of the comte. There is a call for more stage directions in this particular scene, however; if Sophie is to be seen as the stronger of the two characters, it may be better to have her making advances towards the chevalier, with him looking a bit sheepish. This would compensate for the fact that today's audience would perhaps be unaware of the implications of Sophie's admission in Scene 8. Her candour then would have been bordering on the scandalous, as suggested in Chapter 5, p. 132.

Questions of language

I would now like to look at more specific problems concerning language, both of the source text and the target text. Chapter 4 identified those features of the language which characterized this play as an eighteenth-century text; all things considered, the conversational tone of the original play adds to the impression that there are few aspects of eighteenth-century French which the modern-day French reader, or listener, would fail to understand. Taking this matter into consideration, I feel it is viable to produce a translation which retains the conversational tone of the original, but keeps some markers to suggest that the language is slightly dated.[11] Modern-day slang would

[11] This will include the use of tenses such as 'I shall', which has to a great extent been replaced by 'I will'. Other such linguistic markers will be indicated in my points of detail.

change the whole context of the play; the *saveur* of eighteenth-century France would be lost. There is still room for some modern idiomatic phrases in the TT, however.

My intention in translating is not to try to reproduce the dialogue of eighteenth-century English. Firstly, this would suggest a British, rather than a French background to the play, and secondly my knowledge of eighteenth-century English would have to be much wider if I wanted to produce a viable translation. There is also the danger that my target audience might find the dated language rather difficult to follow and they would lose interest in the dialogue.

Language is revealing of characterization in *Le Galant escroc*; there is a great difference, for example between the flowery imagery which characterises the chevalier's speeches in Scene 2, and the comte's blatant questioning. This is a feature of the source text which must be reflected in translation; clichés could feature in the chevalier's langage as a means of reflecting the comte's suggestion that the chevalier talks like someone from a novel. There has to be something artificial about the chevalier's language; he is not as relaxed and as confident as the comte, whose wit has to be reflected in clever one-liners. Timing is important in this scene, for example during the following exchange:

LE CHEVALIER, *d'un air sérieux et noble*: Eh bien, monsieur, je vous dirai, sans faire de serments, mais très sérieusement, que je ne l'ai pas; mais que si je l'avais je me croirais un coquin...
LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: De le dire?
LE CHEVALIER: Oui, de le dire.

Scene 2.

The comte's language in general in this scene is much more clipped and to the point; the chevalier tends to exaggerate, although he sees it as following the rules of etiquette.

The hybrid nature of the play means that there are various shifts in tone throughout; for example, the comte can be seen in Scene 2 as being suggestive and making fun of the chevalier. In Scene 6, however, he suddenly switches to the language of *galanterie* when he first meets up with Mme Gasparin. This switch in tone is vital; the register changes according to the comte's intentions at any given moment. The language of *galanterie* is difficult to convey; there is a danger that the comte may end up sounding overly sentimental, and rather ridiculous to the modern-day audience. A balance has to be achieved between their polite conversation and the real meaning behind their words. Mme Gasparin for example pretends to be embarrassed, and yet it is obvious that she is willing to sleep with the comte in return for the money. As I do not want the register to be low, in the sense that the innuendos are not too obvious, I may have to add stage directions in order to convey the heightening tension in the scene as the sexual attraction between the two characters becomes more obvious. This would achieve the balance between the polite conversation and the underlying sense of debauchery: while the exchanging of polite compliments is reflected in the language, their true feelings could be apparent as they caress one another. This is a matter which I shall return to in my points of detail.

The apparent references to other genres in the play may have been obvious to Collé's audience as they would have known the genres concerned, but there is a distinct possibility that my target audience would not recognize any obvious references to different genres. This would have been more of a problem if I saw Collé's main aim as being to parody other genres; as this is not the case, I think that lack of knowledge of genres such as the *drame* or the *genre larmoyant* is not going to alter my target audience's enjoyment of the play. However, the change in tone is once again important: the style of the *genre larmoyant*, which is perhaps best shown in the portrayal of the chevalier,

suggests that these particular speeches should be full of hyperbole and be exaggerated.

Although there is much more to be said on the question of language, I shall keep more specific comments to the Points of Detail following the translation.

The *vaudeville*

The *vaudeville* is a feature of the play which is separate from the main body of the text, in that it has been set to music, and the language register is different. A difficulty which I have to face in translating the *vaudeville* is the fact that I have been unable to find a musical score for the tune *Tout est dit*; this presents several problems, one being that I have no idea whether the tune is supposed to be jaunty, or solemn. Certainly, as far as the lyrics are concerned, it is more likely that the tune is lively. As Collé has not felt the need to include the musical score in the original published version of the play, the suggestion would seem to be that the tune was sufficiently well known for it to be recognized by the general public. If that is the case, perhaps the best solution for translation purposes is to use a tune which a British audience would be familiar with.

A further problem in not knowing the actual tune is the uneven syllable count in the song. It is most likely that the tune dictated whether the actor chose to sound the mute 'e' for example, as the syllable count is not regular throughout all 5 stanzas. If this is the case, the tune would seem to follow a rhythm of the following syllables per line: 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 10, 8. It is a matter of trying to find a regular tune which will accommodate the English translation.

The question must be asked, however, whether the song should be retained at all. The problem with having a song at the end of the play is that it might reduce the play to a genre more in keeping with pantomine, and this is

not the impression I want my audience to have as they leave the theatre. Certainly, I think what is said in the *vaudeville* is important; it acts as a summary of the play, and adds that final little bit of humour. The characters are now being shown in their true light; there are no more pretensions at the end of the play.

One solution is to retain the *vaudeville*, but to have the characters speak the words, rather than sing them. To give some sort of equivalent effect of audience recognition of the *vaudeville*, I could have the verses in rhyme – possibly in the style of a limerick, which would have connotations of a humour, combined with saucy comments. Although this is changing the *vaudeville* to quite an extent, I believe this would be a much more successful ending to the play, as the audience would associate the rhyme at the end with the moral of the story (which, in a sense, is the real purpose of the *vaudeville*.)

As discussed in both Chapters 2 and 5, the *vaudeville* contains comments which are blunt in comparison with the veiled language of much of the play; it is in the *vaudeville* that the characters' true sense of libertinism comes to light. The vaudeville is thus devoid of euphemisms; this is the one point in the translation where there is no need to veil any sexual innuendo. Direct references to the various characters sleeping with one another will now be appropriate, reflecting the explicitness which was a feature of the *vaudeville* in Collé's time.

Stage directions

The question of stage directions is linked to both what I see to be the author's intentions, and also the way in which I feel the actors and director should be interpreting my translation. Collé actually gives few stage directions in the play; although as mentioned before, there are a lot of hidden stage directions in some of the scenes. I shall be giving a direct translation of most of the original stage directions; however, at times, some of the directions seem

superfluous. For example, the direction *l'interrompant* is given at every point where one character interrupts another's flow of speech. As it is usually clear that the second character is interrupting the first speech from the *points de suspension* and what is actually said in the following speech, I do not feel it is always necessary to retain the stage direction. Where I feel it is necessary is where Collé gives a direction such as *l'interrompant brusquement*, as this says something about the second character's attitude and tone of voice. Rather than part of the natural flow of conversation, this is a deliberate interruption by someone who is becoming impatient, or wanting to stress a particular point.

One could also argue that the lack of stage directions in the original text reflects the specificity of private theatre performances. The intimacy of a private theatre, and the fact that the actors and audience all know one another provides a completely different atmosphere to that of a public theatre. The success of the play depended on the interaction of the actors, and their enthusiasm and spontaneity. Collé knew the duc's social circle, and one would assume that he could tell – at least up to a certain point –how the actors would react to his play. There was no need for Collé to add in many stage directions about characters exchanging knowing looks: amongst a circle of friends and acquaintances who were acting out the play as their evening's entertainment, the reactions to the language would surely come naturally. My translation, however, is being written under totally different circumstances. It is not my intention in the first instance to give the actors so much room for improvisation. My intention is to give a twentieth-century British audience the opportunity to glimpse at a particular social group in eighteenth-century France; what seemed natural and acceptable to an eighteenth-century audience will be unfamiliar to my target audience.

A particular instance where this argument comes into play is the use of *tu* and *vous* in the orignal text. For example, the comte addresses Gasparin

sometimes as *vous* and sometimes *tu*. For a French audience, the distinction is immediately clear through language alone, but English does not have the same linguistic markers. If I feel I cannot convey enough through language alone, an extra stage direction may be a useful solution. For example, when the comte suddenly switches to *tu*, I could indicate that he simply moves closer to Gasparin, or puts his arm around him. Extra stage directions may compensate for a certain degree of translation loss.

Having argued the feasibility of adding in stage directions, it cannot be denied that adding in too many could also prove a problem. Again, the point must be stressed that what works on paper may not always work on stage; if I add too many stage directions, am I not filling the role of the director? There are so many different ways of playing Scene 6 for example; the sexual undertones could be made more explicit by adding in stage directions which have Sophie and the chevalier undressing one another as they declare their undying love for one another. Another possibility is to have the chevalier simply down on his knees throughout, assuming the pose of a man begging for Sophie's affections. Although I may have a particular image in mind, the director and actors may see the scene differently, and lend their own interpretation. By not adding too many stage directions, I am leaving the play more open to interpretation, as is more the case perhaps with the original text. I shall return to this argument in my points of detail; as a general rule, I think that it will be necessary for me to add a certain number of stage directions. My interpretation of the text is not wholly personal; it is based on the background information contained in Chapters 1 to 5. My research enables me to be in a privileged position of understanding some of the connotations of the play which might not be immediately obvious to a first-time reader of the text. A director may of course see fit to ignore my stage directions: this is something which the writer of any form of drama has to accept.

Costume, scenery and lighting

Theatre conditions in the eigheenth century were vastly different from the options available to directors today; the question is whether it is necessary in translation to specify such aspects as costume, scenery and lighting. Costume for this particular play did not pose a problem in Collé's time; the actors would simply be wearing the clothes they normally wore. However, if my intention is to retain an impression of eighteenth-century France, it is necessary to specify costume. This is a visual reminder to the audience that the scene is taking place in a different century, and in a different setting. Again, this could be seen as some sort of compensation for translation loss; it is impossible for me to accurately recreate the language and mannerisms of eighteenth-century actors. The translator can only produce an estimation of how they imagine the play to be; the constant reminder of costume on stage is an aid to the audience's imagination, transporting them back in time.

Specifying costume details also provides the opportunity to underline the class differences between the comte and Gasparin, for example. As discussed in Chapter 3, Gasparin and the comte are essentially of equal social status, although Gasparin has achieved such status because of his wealth and powerful position as a *financier*. The comte is still superior in the sense that he belongs to the *noblesse de race*. The difference between the two could be reflected in their costume: the comte, as a member of the nobility, can carry a sword and his clothes can be fancy, yet elegant. Gasparin, on the other hand, could wear a similar style of clothes but in garish colours, to show his attempts to fit in with the nobility, but his lack of good taste.[12]

It was not common practice for eighteenth-century authors to specify costume, as explained by Peyronnet in *La Mise en scène au dix-huitième siècle*

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[12] I do not feel there is a necessity for Gasparin to appear totally ridiculous; he is not an *obsédé* of the likes of Molière characters, and cannot be classed as the villain, or the fool of the play. However, the distinction between his social background and the comte's is important to an understanding of the feeling of rivalry between the comte and Gasparin, of which the source audience would have been much more aware.

(1974, p. 12). In the Comédie-française, for example, actors and actresses were more concerned with looking attractive on stage; it was not unusual to see a maidservant dressed as finely as the actress playing her mistress in the play. It was really only in the second half of the eighteenth century that authors started to insist more on realistic costumes and settings for their plays. Nowadays, the reader or spectator of a play tends to take such matters as costume and scenery for granted. An audience will assume that if the costumes do not fit in with their expectations, it is for a symbolic or allegorical reason, and not because the actors and actresses are more concerned with their own appearances.

Scenery will also make a difference to audience perception of my version of the play. Collé indicates that the whole play takes place in one room, common to the apartments of both the Gasparins. I do not see a need to change the scenery to a different room at any point; the fact that it all takes place in the one room means that there is no break in the action. As the stage is not divided into several rooms, our attention is always on the particular group of characters acting out the scene. However, as with costume, there is a need for me to specify the contents of the room to some extent. Again, this is something which Collé did not have to think about; he knew exactly what the duc's private theatre was like. As mentioned in Chapter 2, private theatres owned by the wealthy were extremely ornate; the fact that the duc's theatre was compared favourably with that of Marie-Antoinette is an indication of just how luxurious the surroundings would have been. Gasparin's wealth could be reflected in the scenery; gold ornaments and rich furnishings would indicate the amount of money at his disposal.

Conditions of lighting in the eighteenth century would have been extremely poor in comparison with the equipment available to contemporary directors. It would be possible for me to add indications for lighting; for example, during a monologue a spotlight could be shone directly onto the

character to insolate them on stage and further emphasize the fact that they are talking alone, speaking their thoughts aloud with only the audience listening. However, I feel that this is the type of ploy for the director to decide upon; any good director will know how to adapt lighting to fit in with the tone of particular scenes. I did consider the possibility of having the characters bathed in red light in some of the scenes, for example the seduction scene between Mme Gasparin and the comte. This would certainly reflect the underlying sexual connotations, but a red light carries the image of prostitution, and I feel this would be taking the image slightly too far. The tone is playful; red lighting suggests something more sordid and underhand.

MY TRANSLATION STRATEGY IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATION THEORY

Having decided upon a strategy for a translation of the play, I would now like to establish how this strategy compares with both contemporary translation theory and past methods of translators and translation theorists. There has been a considerable growth in works relating to translation theory in the past thirty years; I shall discuss prominent representatives of the main trends found in these works.

Issues concerning a performance-related approach

It is generally accepted that the translation of drama with a view to subsequent performance poses certain problems for the translator which do not necessarily arise when translating other genres. In *The Languages of Theatre* (1980), Zuber discusses the complex processes at work when translating drama:

> A play depends on additional elements, such as movements, gestures, postures, mimicry, speech rhythms, intonations, music and other sound

effects, lights, stage scenery. In particular, a play is dependent on the immediacy of the impact on the audience.

Zuber (ed.), 1980, p. 92.

Similar points are made by theorists such as Bassnett-McGuire (1980, p. 132), Larose (1989, p. 172) and Gostand (in Zuber, 1980, p. 1). However much the translator can make allowances for the various complexities of theatre translation, there is no guarantee that the text will stand up to the test in performance.[13] Translating drama is not a simple process of translating language alone; it will become clear in my Points of Detail that factors such as the above must also be considered.

A specific problem which is isolated by many critics of theatre translation is that of the proportions of the speech; these must correspond to the physical gestures of the characters on stage, and the inflexion of the character's voice at crucial moments. In *Translating Meaning* (1982), Nida makes an interesting comparison between the translation of theatre and the dubbing of foreign films: the dubbing of Japanese films, for example, can produce at times a comical effect, as the words do not always correspond to the actors' utterances in their own language, and the physical gestures which accompany key lines. Although this is a different context, it is a good illustration of the importance of maintaining the proportions of a speech. In the theatre, for example, a character may be angry, and his speech in the source text may be short and to the point. In order to achieve the same effect in the target text, a speech running for several lines will lose the impact of the original.

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[13] According to Newmark, *no* translation is ever finished: '... one has to keep paring away at it, tightening the language. The shorter the translation, the better it is likely to be' (Newmark, in Delisle, 1980, p. 181). Theatre translation poses a specific problem, however, because of the direct involvement of the director, actors and the immediacy of the target audience.

It is not just the length of the lines which must be taken into consideration, however. According to Maurice Gravier, the theatre text has its own musicality which adds to the impact of what is being said:

> Mais le dialogue n'est pas constitué seulement par une somme de répliques; comme nous l'indiquons, il constitue un tout, il possède par lui-même son rythme, sa logique (ou son illogisme), ses séquences quasi-autonomes, ses thèmes et ses leitmotive, ses enchaînements et ses ruptures, parfois aussi une musicalité obsédante. La réplique n'existe plus guère, examinée de ce point de vue, que comme un petit rouage dans un vaste mécanisme, ou mieux comme une note sur une partition.
>
> Gravier, in Bensimon (ed.), 1987, p. 2.

Although I agree with Gravier that a speech does have a particular musicality, I do not feel this is the uppermost concern in translating *Le Galant escroc*. Certainly, some of the speeches have musical qualities, particularly the change in rhythm in Scene 6, when the comte's language becomes much more stylised:

> **LE COMTE:** Et moi, Reine, j'arrive exprès de la campagne pour voler à vos ordres, et vous apporter les deux cents louis...
>
> Scene 6.

There is a need at this point to distinguish between the comte's internal thoughts of the previous scene, and the poetic qualities of speeches such as the above, of which musicality is an important point. The musicality of the text becomes important at those points where there is an obvious change from what one might term the characters' 'everyday conversation', as is exemplified by the monologues and the conversations between the comte and M. Gasparin.

An example of when the musicality of a text can become an overriding feature is presented by Jean-Michel Deprats, in a study entitled *Traduire Shakespeare pour le théâtre* (1987). Deprats claims that an audience is much more aware of the rhythm of Shakespeare's plays than, for example, the

theatricality. Consequently, a translator into French should perhaps concentrate on the rhythm, rather than adhering strictly to the lexical meaning of the text. He admits that this has made for previous translations which were considered unfaithful to the original text, but his overall conclusion is that keeping the natural rhythm of the text will enable the actor to take over the script, using the rhythm to recreate the gestural qualities which were contained in the source text:

> En somme, il s'agit moins de traduire pour le théâtre, opération qui évoque toujours une adaptation à des fins extérieures, que de traduire du théâtre.
>
> Deprats, in Bensimon, 1987, p. 63.

As Collé's play does not have the same emphasis on rhythm, the target text should surely not reflect this as being an overriding factor. Deprats does, however, emphasize the need for theatricality, and the need to preserve what he terms the *énergie vocale* of the text. In my translation of *Le Galant escroc*, I shall be concerned more with the resulting rhythm of my target text in terms of how it may add to what is being actually said. Rhythm is not the guiding factor; it is only one consideration among many. The importance to which I will attribute the speech proportions in the text is perhaps best summed up by Françoise Vreck in *Traduire la résonance*:

> Bien plus que les capacités de souffle et de diction du comédien, ce sont les capacités de compréhension du spectateur qui imposent leur exigence de clarté et comme il n'est pas question de répéter, de diluer, de sur-expliciter le message et donc de ralentir l'action, le texte entendu doit être immédiatement intelligible, ce qui a des conséquences très nettes sur la syntaxe.
>
> Vreck, in Ballard, 1990, p. 121.

Word-for-word versus free translation

Having established that there are many more forces at work in theatre translation than the lexical meaning of words, this calls into question the ongoing debate concerning the advantages and disadvantages of producing a 'free' translation, as opposed to a word-for-word approach. This dichotomy has been a matter of concern for many authors and theorists throughout the centuries; works such as Lefevere's *Translation/History/Culture* (1992), Steiner's *After Babel* (1975) and Ballard's *De Cicéron à Benjamin* (1992) provide comprehensive details of the arguments put forward by the theorists in question.

The opinions of John Dryden (1631-1700) are a good starting-point for a discussion of free versus word-for word translation. In the preface to his translation of Ovid's Epistles, published in 1680, Dryden distinguishes between three approaches to translation: metaphrase (word-for-word, line-by-line translation); paraphrase (sense-for-sense translation) and imitation (the translator makes changes as he sees fit). Dryden outwardly rejects the notion of metaphrase, claiming that literalism is self-defeating:

> The verbal copier is encumbered with so many difficulties at once, that he can never disentangle himself from all. He is to consider, at the same time, the thought of his author, and his words, and to find out the counterpart to each in another language; and, besides this, he is to confine himself to the compass of numbers, and the slavery of rhyme. 'Tis much like dancing on ropes with fettered legs: a man may shun a fall by using caution; but gracefulness of motion is not to be expected: and when we have said the best of it, 'tis but a foolish task; for no sober man would put himself into a danger for the applause of escaping without breaking his neck.
>
> Dryden, in Lefevere, 1992, p. 103.

The process of imitation, however, is no better in Dryden's eyes. Commenting on the translations of Pindar and Horace by Cowley, Dryden claimed that too

much deviation from the orignal text meant that you could no longer consider the translation to be a reflection of the original author's work:

> To state it fairly: imitation of an author is the most advantageous way for a translator to show himself, but the greatest wrong which can be done to the memory and reputation of the dead.
>
> Ibid, p. 104.

Dryden saw the best solution as being *paraphrase*; in the preface of his translation of Virgil (issued in 1697), he sums up his argument in the following terms:

> On the whole matter, I thought fit to steer betwixt the two extremes of paraphrase and literal translation; to keep as near my author as I could. Without losing all his graces, the most eminent of which are in the beauty of his words; and those words, I must add, are always figurative. Such of these as would retain their elegance in our tongue, I have endeavoured to graft on it; but most of them are of necessity to be lost, because they will not shine in any but their own. Virgil has sometimes two of them in a line; but the scantiness of our heroic verse is not capable of receiving more than one; and that too must expiate for many others which have none. Such is the difference of the languages, or such my want of skill in choosing words. Yet I may presume to say... that, taking all the materials of this divine author, I have endeavoured to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present age.
>
> Dryden, in Steiner, 1975, pp. 269-270.

Dryden's idea of sense-for-sense translation was by no means a new one; one of the earliest known supporters of this theory (and still much quoted today) was Cicero. He also saw the necessity of retaining the tone of the original where possible, adapting the language to make it more readily understood by his target audience (an outline of Cicero's theories on translation can be found in Mounin, 1994, p. 56). There were, of course, many supporters of word-for-word translation also. History has shown that the translation of the Bible has taken the notion of fidelity to the original text to the extreme; those who

attempted translation could have been accused of heresy. Ballard sees Luther's translation of the New Testament into German in 1521 as the turning-point in the gradual acceptance of the vernacular, and the acceptance – for some – of the creative process involved in translating the Bible.

Is word-for-word translation acceptable under certain circumstances, or is it a notion which should be rejected as unfeasible? Bassnett-McGuire makes an important distiction between scientific and literary texts: the amount of deviation between source text and target text will tend to be smaller in scientific texts, as the translator is dealing with more factual information which may have to be reproduced exactly for the target reader. [14] Donald Watson also sees a case for word-for-word translation when considering the work of Ionesco (cf. *Bon esprit, bon sens ou bons mots?* in Bensimon, 1987). Watson claims that words are not always supposed to make sense in Ionesco, and so translating them literally is as good an approach as any. However, the arguments against word-for-word translation are convincing. Certainly as far as concerns a translation of *Le Galant escroc*, a word-for word translation would produce something which sounds clumsy at best, and which a theatre audience would probably find impossible to follow. I would not be taking into account what Albir terms *les connaissances extra-linguistiques* (1990, p. 46). My aim in translating Collé's play is to produce a version which can be easily followed, and enjoyed by my target audience, keeping in mind the conventions and setting of the eighteenth century. Although a word-for-word translation would focus on the source text, the resulting translation would lose the element of theatricality which is such an important element of Collé's work. A word-for-word translation could, therefore, be regarded as unfaithful to the author's original intentions.

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[14] Can information of any kind be reproduced exactly in another language? The notion of equivalence is discussed on pages 187-189.

The relationship between source text and target text

Is translation possible?

In *Les Belles infidèles* (1994) Mounin looks at the basic question of whether translation of any text from one language to another is actually possible. Mounin lists those theorists in the past who have considered translation to be an impossibility; paying particular attention to Joachim du Bellay, whose *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoyse* (dated 1549) criticised attempted translations of foreign languages into French as an impediment to the birth of an original French language. Du Bellay criticised those translators who had no knowledge of the source text language, and who used another translation in order to attempt their own translation. Mounin gives various other examples of similar opinions over the centuries, including Mme Dacier, Rivarol and Mme de Stael, all of whom were eighteenth-century theorists. He goes on, however, to refute all the arguments he sets out in the first chapter of this study, coming to the conclusion that translation is not just possible, but is also a necessary process in a world in which communication has reached such heights of importance.

Most contemporary theorists follow the same line of argument as Mounin, setting out the various problems involved in translating, but finally coming to the conclusion that translation is possible of most texts, although the degree to which it can be considered successful translation is debatable. Lawrence Venuti, for example, claims that the translator will never be able to produce a perfect copy of the original text:

> The 'original' is a form of self-expression appropriate to the author, a copy true to his personality or intention, an image endowed with resemblance, whereas the translation can be no more than a copy of a copy, derivative, simulacral, false, an image without resemblance.
>
> Venuti (ed.), 1992, p. 3.

Both Nida and Steiner argue the viewpoint that human experience is so alike throughout the world, and people are constantly having to adjust to different

physical and social environments. Even though languages are different, emotions are similar throughout the world and we will all react in similar ways, or at least be able to understand the reactions of others to any text. Steiner claims human beings can adapt to their circumstances, and are able to express and say anything:

> Given a vocabulary and a set of procedural rules (both subject to change), given the limitations of comprehensibility and certain performance boundaries (no endless sentences), we can *say anything.*
>
> Steiner, 1974, p. 227.

Without acceptance of the possibility of translation, it seems pointless to continue to theorize on the numerous strategies open to the translator of texts. A more important question which has been of interest to contemporary translation theorists is that of the degree of *equivalence* which can be achieved in translating. The notion of equivalence in translation will be discussed at a later point in this chapter.

The role of the translator

The perceived role of the translator can also determine translation strategies. According to Bassnett-McGuire, there were two conflicting images of the translator in nineteenth-century translation theory which still exist today:

1. The translator is seen as a creative genius in his own right.
2. The translator has the mechanical function of 'making known' a text, and should not deviate from the source author's intentions.

According to Venuti, this second image of the translator as the mere mouthpiece of the original author is closest to contemporary judgement:

> A translated text is judged successful – by most editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, by translators themselves – when it reads fluently, when it gives the appearance that it is not translated, that it is the original, transparently reflecting the foreign author's personality or intention or the

essential meaning of the foreign text.

Venuti (ed.), 1992, p. 4.

Venuti's opinion is relevant for the translator of drama, in that the target text should read fluently if this is the case in the source language. Certainly, my intention in translating *Le Galant escroc* is to produce a text which does not sound like a stilted version of a foreign play, but which takes into account the period it is set in and the author's intentions. However, it could be said that my role as a translator of the play is going to go beyond this. The fact that I am adding in extra stage directions where I see fit could be seen as an embellishment on my part. Whether the source author intended the scene to be played in that particular way is a question which only he would have been able to answer. As this is not possible, I am interpreting the text and colouring it with my own views up to a certain point. However, I agree with Bassnett-McGuire's conclusion that all translation involves interpretation on the translator's part (1980, p. 100). She argues that translation and interpretation are not separate activities, as every reading is in itself an interpretation. Obviously, the degree to which someone interprets a text can differ; when, for example, does translation become *adaptation*, or is every translation an adaptation? I shall return to this point under the subheading *Consideration of the target audience*.

The notion of to what extent the translator should add to the source text is taken up by Vreck in *Traduire la Résonance* (in Ballard, 1990, pp. 109-123). She suggests that the translator has the option of using 'un vocable apparemment neutre' (p. 120) in order to allow the actor and director to interpret the text as they see fit. I disagree with this opinion in the case of translating *Le Galant escroc*; as a translator, I have researched the possible hidden connotations and identified features of the language, social situation etc. of the characters which may have some bearing on how the text was supposed to be interpreted. I am, therefore, in a certain privileged position, in

that I can make an assessment of the text based on arguments which have –according to my research and my understanding of the text – some foundation. What I am proposing to add to the source text is my interpretation of the author's aims, which the first-time reader of Collé would not necessarily consider. In this sense, I feel I am not changing the text to a great extent; my intention is to try to highlight certain features of the text which the source audience would have been aware of, and of which the target audience might not be aware.

The source author's aims and intentions

The question of whether the translator should take the source author's aims and intentions into account seems irrelevant, as it is virtually impossible to ignore the specific qualities of the ST which result from the source author's particular colouring of the text. According to Françoise du Sorbier, the relationship between translator and source author becomes that of a person obsessed:

> Il y a, en amont de la traduction, tout un travail sur la face cachée du texte et son histoire au sens le plus large du terme, travail qui peut aller de la simple analyse littéraire à une véritable recherche archéologique dans certains cas [...] Vivre non seulement entre deux langues, mais bel et bien en compagnie intime d'un autre être à qui l'on va consacrer le plus clair – ou le plus sombre – de son temps et de son activité, consciente et inconsciente. Bref, le temps de la traduction, il faut accepter d'être possédé.
>
> In Taylor et al (eds), 1996, pp. 151-152.

The translator must at least be aware of unexpressed content in a source text; whether he chooses to reflect the inexpressed content in the target text is another matter. Delisle refers to this process as *le calcul des sous-entendus.* The unexpressed content may take the form of paraphrase or euphemisms, for example the comment 'he's widely known as a sociable colleague' may actually mean 'he can't take his drink'. Nida goes further in his assessment of

the types of unexpressed content which the translator may have to look out for. He claims the author's intentions can be listed under eight functions: expressive, cognitive, egocentric, informative, imperative, performative, emotic and phatic. Although these types of function may in fact overlap in any given text, these distinctions nonetheless provide the translator with useful guidelines as to the possible intentions of a source author. The dialogue of *Le Galant escroc* has so many hidden connotations, in terms of both the characters' relationship to one another, and Collé's possible hidden agendas, that it is impossible not to try to reflect this in translation by trying to colour the text in some way. As mentioned in my strategic decisions, this may take the form of adding stage directions, or using terms of endearment for example when a character addresses another as *tu*, rather than *vous*. There may be times, of course, when it is unsuitable for the translator to try to emulate the source author's intentions. This problem arises in the translation of Scene 8 of *Le Galant escroc*. As mentioned in my strategic decisions, the tone of this scene will appear totally different to my target audience, as what was seen as a tender scene between two young lovers in the eighteenth century may now appear over-the-top. This problem is recognized by Françoise du Sorbier:

> Prenons comme exemple le discours amoureux. Comme beaucoup d'autres, il est tributaire de la mode (littérairement, s'entend). 'Va, je ne te hais point' passe beaucoup plus facilement les époques que 'Va, tu es mon lion superbe et généreux'. Que faire lorsque, en étant fidèle au texte d'origine, dont l'intention manifeste est d'émouvoir, on en arrive dans la langue-cible, à des énoncés frisant le ridicule?
>
> In Taylor et al (eds), 1996, p. 154.

The same problem applies to humour, and to slang expressions; the laddish conversation between the comte and Gasparin in Scene 10 could seem overly

crude in translation (although this may be the intended effect by the source author anyway).

The notion of considering the author's aims and intentions does, however, call into question whether it is even possible to evaluate the 'meaning' of a text, and whether in fact some form of equivalence can be achieved in the target text. To look first of all at an evaluation of the author's intentions, the differentiation Steiner makes between 'public' and 'private' speech illustrates the difficulty of evaluating any text for translation. 'Private' speech is the notion of idiolect, i.e. an individual's characteristic use of language. An example of idiolect in its purest form is the genre of nonsense poetry, for example Lewis Carroll. Steiner claims translation becomes impossible at this level of idiolect:

> When literature seeks to break its public linguistic mould and become idiolect, when it seeks untranslatability, we have entered a new world of feeling.
>
> Steiner, 1974, p. 192.

However, the translator is not always faced with such a problem. There are ways of establishing references in a source text; the dictionaries and encyclopedias alone which a contemporary translator has at his disposition enable him to evaluate certain connotations. This is the case for a translation of *Le Galant escroc;* although at first the comments made about the *financier* were beyond my comprehension, research has enabled me to understand the force behind the comments. To use the terminology of Hatim and Mason, I am the *mediator* in the process of communicating a source text to a target audience (1990, p. 224).

There are those who argue that equivalence between a source text and target text is impossible to achieve; Venuti, for example talks about translation as a form of interpretation, rather than equivalence between two texts:

> A translation is never quite 'faithful,' always somewhat 'free,' it never establishes an identity, always a lack and a supplement, and it can never be a transparent representation, only an interpretive transformation that exposes multiple and divided meanings in the foreign text and displaces it with another set of meanings, equally multiple and divided.
>
> Venuti, 1992, p. 8.

Other theorists talk of equivalent 'spirit' or 'sense' but, as Steiner points out, these definitions can be rather vague. He claims that translation, by its very nature, will add something to the source text, as the translator is conveying what is contained in the source text and adding his own interpretation to the text. 'Meaning' should not just be seen in terms of lexical equivalence:

> The translator must actualize the implicit 'sense', the denotative, connotative, illative, intentional, associative range of significations which are implicit in the original, but which it leaves undeclared or only partly declared simply because the native auditor or reader has an immediate understanding of them.
>
> Steiner, 1974, p. 291.

Nida also defines meaning in terms of units, rather than single words, emphasizing the need to consider the whole text before deciding upon any form of translation strategy. He also distinguishes between *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*; in the case of diplomatic negotiations, for example, formal equivalence is the most important consideration, as what is said and the careful wording of the speaker is vital in negotiating between two parties. Dynamic equivalence is where the communicative significance is more important, where there is more latitude for the translator to alter the original in order to convey the overall meaning of the source text (Nida, 1964).

I do not see my translation of Collé to be *equivalent* as such; the term equivalence is in my opinion unsuitable in this case. It seems more beneficial to talk about translation in terms of *degrees* of equivalence; my translation, for example is equivalent to a greater degree to the original than an approach

which transposes the original plot to twentieth-century Britain, using contemporary modern slang. Holmes talks of translation in terms of finding *matchings* or *counterparts*: perhaps one should simply accept his conclusion that no two texts are ever truly equivalent (Holmes, 1988, pp. 53-64).

Consideration of the target audience

The translator cannot totally ignore the expectations of his target audience; the intention behind every translation is to convey information, in whatever form, contained in a source text to an audience which will benefit from that information. However, the degree to which one must take the target audience's culture and language into account may prove problematical for the translator. [15]

The term *Les Belles infidèles* originally referred to a type of translation which flowered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France (in the preface to the study *Les Belles infidèles*, Mounin gives some examples of the most prominent promoters of this particular translation practice. These include Etienne Dolet, Jacques Amyot and Madame Dacier). The term originates from a metaphor comparing translations of literary texts to women: if beautiful, they tend to be unfaithful. In other words, if translators tried to stick rigidly to what they see as the source author's original intentions, the translation will appear stilted. There was a tendency in France in the seventeenth century in particular for translators to adapt source texts to the point that they were more concerned with the aesthetic demands of the contemporary audience. The intention was to recreate the original spirit, or message of the source text by adapting them to fit contemporary standards of language and taste. An example of a French production being adapted to fit the expectations of a British audience is the Ambrose Phillips' version of

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[15] As I have already discussed the distinction between word-for-word and free translation, I shall be concentrating more on the cultural and theatrical expectations of the target audience in this section.

Racine's *Andromaque* at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Alterations to the play include adding or shortening speeches, and even changing the final scene to make for a happy ending. Phillips rejected critcism of his translation as deviating too much from the original:

> If I had been able to keep up to the Beauties of Monsieur *Racine* in my Attempt, and to do him no Prejudice in the Liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a Poet, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with the Labour it has cost me to bring the compleatest of his works upon the *English* stage.
>
> Phillips, in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980, p. 125.

My translation strategy for *Le Galant escroc* does emphasize the notion of theatricality, just as Phillips' version of *Andromaque* has done. However, I have not opted for such substantial changes to the source text. Phillips was faced with the problem that his audience had very different views on theatre to a French audience at that time, and he chose to give preference to the expectation of his target audience. As outlined in my translation strategies, conventions such as the numbering of scenes do not pose a particular problem.

All things considered, can one say that translations such as *The Distres't Mother* are *adaptations* of the original, and should the same term be applied to my translation of *Le Galant escroc*? There are many differing views on the interpretation of terms such as translation, adaptation and version. Franz Link tentatively suggests that translation of an older text deviates enough from the original to take it beyond the term translation. It becomes *rewriting*:

> Rewriting is, strictly speaking, not the interpretation of a dramatic text, but the interpretation of its story or subject. It must be pointed out, however, that, in this context, the interpretation of an older play in a contemporary

production may come very close to the production of a new play based on the same story or the same subject.

Link, in Zuber (ed.), 1980, p. 45.

In translating *Le Galant escroc*, I am not only following the same story or the same subject: my translation also takes into account the cultural and historical background of eighteenth-century French society. The adustments I have made to the play, such as adding in details about costume etc., are still relevant to the source culture, rather than adapting such details to make the play seem like a reflection of contemporary society. I do not believe I have gone beyond the 'simple adjustments' which Reid claims are essential to maintaining the theatricality of the target text:

> But when the 'translation' goes beyond those simple adjustments to make substantial excisions or additions it has become in fact an adaptation – which is capable of distorting the essential conception.
>
> Reid, in Zuber (ed.), 1980, p. 82.

Phillips' translation has certainly gone beyond the matter of simple adjustments, whereas I am attempting a closer match to the source text in my translation of Collé. Perhaps the best term to apply to my translation is that of *version*: I have considered the source language and culture, but not to the extent that the final script loses its playability. Nor have I been so concerned with playability that the features of the source text are no longer recognizable. There is a middle path between consideration of the source culture and language, and the expectations of a target audience. My *version* of *Le Galant escroc* could be described in the following terms:

> The task of a translator as well as that of a producer of a modern play should be to transpose the play in such a manner, that the message of the original and the dramatist's intention be adhered to as closely as possible and be rendered, linguistically and artistically, into a form which takes into account the different traditional, cultural and socio-political background of the recipient country. Zuber, 1980, p. 95.

There is no set way of deciding whether a translator should favour the source culture or the target culture; it depends on the extent to which the target culture is willing to accept and understand references from a different culture and a different period in history. Collé's play does not present any major problems as far as exoticism is concerned: a British audience is not going to be shocked by the libertinism of the play, for example. As mentioned previously, I wish to convey more than the basic plot of *Le Galant escroc*, which necessarily involves keeping in mind the source culture and language.

Questions of Language

The contribution of linguistic analysis to translation theory

Any comparison between source text and target text gives rise to linguistic analysis of some form; there are some differences between French and English which may pose a particular problem for the translator. Studies such as Catford's *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* (1965) and Vinay and Darbelnet's *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958) forged a new path for translation methodology, but it must be said that both the above works are more helpful as points of reference for the translator when assessing the linguistic differences between French and English texts. In *Théories contemporaines de la traduction*, Robert Larose acknowledges the importance of linguistic theory, but points out the restrictions of certain studies. He says of Catford in particular:

> Incapable de déborder le cadre rigide de la phrase («rank-bound» translation) et décontextualisant l'activité traduisante, Catford révèle du même coup son incompréhension de la nature dynamique de la traduction.
>
> Larose, 1989, p. 113.

This seems a fair conclusion to make about Catford; he, like Vinay and Darbenet, provides a comprehensive analysis of the diffences between French and English, but as the comparisons are made on the level of the phrase,

rather than the text, their theories only help me to recognize certain features of my source and target texts. As I have already shown by my list of translation strategies, I cannot base my entire translation on solving the linguistic differences between English and French alone.[16] For example, there is no linguistic equivalent in English for the distinction between *tu* and *vous*. The problem does not just lie on the linguistic level; it is a matter of assessing the relationship between the various characters, and questions such as why at that particular point there is a notable change in how one of the characters may address the other. Trying to find some sort of compensation in English will not always be achieved by using, for example, words of endearment when there is a switch to *tu*. What the character is actually saying may suggest an internal stage direction; falling at someone's feet, for example. This is where the translation goes beyond linguistic considerations. The translator has to make an analysis not just based on linguistic differences, but also on awareness of social codes, and assessment of the characters' relationship. In *L'Analyse du discours comme méthode de traduction*, Delisle sets out what he refers to as *les paliers du maniement du langage*, which take his strategies for translation beyond linguistics. Delisle claims there are four main considerations in the process of translating:

1. *Les conventions de l'écriture*

Examples are the use of capital letters in titles, units of measure and time, etc.

2. *L'exégèse lexicale*

Words in one language do not always have an exact equivalent in another language. It is possible to directly replace one word for another in some cases, such as numerals (*niveau zéro*). However, some words may change their meaning in a given context (*premier niveau*), and other words may not even exist, i.e. they have been invented by the author, and only he knows the

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[16] I shall highlight particular linguistic problems, including syntatical features, in the Points of Detail following the translation.

significance of the word (*second niveau*). Delisle claims that the translator must make a choice by using his own judgement:

> Si l'on *s'écarte* de l'enveloppe formelle, c'est pour *se rapprocher* du sens, et non pour s'en éloigner davantage.
>
> Delisle, 1980, p. 107.

The third *palier* is then

3. *L'interprétation de la charge stylistique*

There are always four intervening elements in a text: the author, the subject treated, the *vecteur* (genre of the text, linguistic qualities) and target audience. Of these 4, Delisle claims the most difficult thing for the translator to do is to retain fidelity to the source author.

4. *L'organicité textuelle*

This concerns the coherence and cohesion of the text. A translator has to perceive both the implicit and explicit messages behind the information contained in the text. The final translation should stand on is own, and not have the appearance of a translation or a *mauvaise rédaction* (p. 121).

Although I have only given a basic outline of Delisle's conclusions, I think they show ample consideration of linguistic, and non-linguistic considerations when translating a text. From this argument, Delisle lists 23 possible approaches to translation: although each could not be considered as a strategy for translating a whole text, he does, nonetheless, list approaches which could be applied to the translation of *Le Galant escroc*. For example approach 9, *Le calcul des sous-entendus*, is of the utmost importance in translating Collé. He also touches on the problem of idiomatic phrases, and the process of recreating a translation which does not sound stilted. The following metaphor could apply equally as well to my aims in translating the colourful dialogue of *Le Galant escroc*:

> Cette prose à cheval sur deux langues est comparable à une pièce de musique exécutée sans faute sur un instrument mal accordé.

Ibid., p. 210.

It must be said that Delisle again does not always give concrete advice to the translator as to how to solve the problems he raises. However, his theories provide a basis for assessing the source text which go beyond the field of linguistics. For a translation of *Le Galant escroc*, this is an essential step to follow.

A more suitable approach for theatre translation is perhaps one which is based on semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs in social instances which may or may not be linked to linguistic expression. Peter Bogatyrev's concept of theatre discourse sums up in very general terms the contribution which the field of semiotics can make to an understanding of a play:

> Linguistic expression in theatre is a structure of signs constituted not only as discourse signs, but also as other signs. For example, theatre discourse, that must be the sign of a character's social situation is accompanied by the actor's gestures, finished off by his costumes, the scenery, etc. which are all equally signs of a social situation.
>
> Bogatyrev, in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980, p. 122.

According to Hatim and Mason, the translator may want to leave out or replace certain signs if the target culture is totally different from the source culture. Forms of address, for example, could be seen as signs, in that they point to the relationship between the characters concerned. In *Le Galant escroc*, it is important to know that it was quite normal for husband and wife to address one another as *vous*, and Monsieur/Madame in the eighteenth century. The modern translator should not see the forms of address as being extremely formal, and purposely try to recreate the same level of formality in the target text. [17]

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[17] This would pose more of a problem if I were wanting to modernize the setting and language of the ST. As I want to convey something of eighteenth-century conventions, the dialogue may appear formal to the modern audience anyway.

Nida also comments on the importance of semiotics to the translator of drama. He refers to Jakobson's terminology concerning the relation of signs to referents; there are three basic classifications: iconic, indexical and conventional. An iconic sign is one where there is a similarity between the sign and the reference, e.g. a metaphor such as 'the hounds are after me'. The image of chasing hounds corresponds to the idiomatic meaning. A sign which is indexical centres around the idea of association, e.g. the hands of a watch referring to the passage of time. An example of a conventional sign is a red triangle indicating danger or acting as a warning to the referent. Jakobson then sees the semiotic approach to interpreting a text as operating on three levels: a basic understanding of the text, an analytical study in terms of structure and setting, and consideration of symbolical significance. Semiotics thus goes beyond linguistic considerations; Nida sees it as a technology which uses linguistics, information theory, psychology, and anthropology:

> One may say, therefore, that translation is essentially a skill, an art, and a technology, in the sense of a related set of techniques derived from the sciences of human behaviour.
>
> Nida, 1982, p. 23.

Semiotics is a useful means of clarifying the different forces at work within theatre discourse; the translator will still have to make the choice of whether to retain the same signs in the TT. My decision to indicate that the characters are dressed in the style of eighteenth-century costume can be seen as a sign which was not necessarily significant in the ST, but which becomes more relevant in the TT. It is an indication of setting, of period, and of the characters' social status.

Allusions to other texts

The apparent allusions to other genres in *Le Galant escroc* raise the important question of intertextuality, and how the translator should deal with it.

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Collé is making an allusion to one particular author or authors, there are stylistic features which are more typical of other genres. Hatim and Mason claim that intertextual references can be active or passive, i.e. they can be included in the text for a purpose, or the references are non-intentional (1990, p. 125). It is possible that intertextuality is a feature of every text which occurs naturally. Bassnett-McGuire quotes Terry Eagleton's definition of intertextuality in his analysis of poetry:

> Every text is a set of determinate transformations of other, preceding and surrounding texts of which it may not even be consciously aware; it is within, against and across these other texts that the poem emerges into being. And these other texts are, in their turn, 'tissues' of such pre-existent textual elements, which can never be unravelled back to some primordial moment of 'origin'.
>
> In Bassnett-McGuire, 1980, p. 104.

Is it possible, then, that the allusions to other genres in *Le Galant escroc* are coincidental, a natural result of the author's subconscious awareness of different texts? As the language is so stylized in certain scenes, I believe there has to have been a certain amount of intentionality on Collé's part. It is impossible for me to assess whether Collé's target audience would have immediately thought of a certain author upon hearing the language of galanterie adopted by the comte and Mme Gasparin in Scene 6, for example. However, the style of the language would certainly have been more readily recognized by an eighteenth-century audience, as opposed to today's audience. Is there a case for trying to imitate the style of genre Collé chooses to parody?

In answering this question, the length of time which has passed between the appearance of the original text being referred to and the target text is an important consideration. Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) are quoted as describing the intertextual difference between the two texts as the degree

of *mediation* (in Hatim and Mason, 1990, p. 127). This takes into consideration not only the length of time which has passed, but also the extent to which the audience know the author being referred to. Mediation would be greater after a longer passage of time, but if the reference is to a very well-known text mediation is smaller. In the case of *Le Galant escroc*, mediation would be much greater than, for example, if Collé had overtly referred to an author such as Shakespeare or Molière. However, in the theatre, the allusion may be lost anyway. The action is fast, and the audience does not always have time to ponder on possible allusions threaded throughout the text. The allusions to other genres are important, in that they indicate a change in tone, and sometimes in attitude as concerns the various characters in the play. The approach I have outlined on pages 168-169 does take the notion of intertextuality into account, but without paying undue attention to finding possible references from eighteenth-century English plays which could be considered the 'equivalent' of the French genres. Had the reference been to a definite author or text, there might have been more of an argument for such an approach.

The use of archaism in the target text

The translation of an eighteenth-century text raises the problem of whether the translator should retain some form of archaism in the language of the translated version. By producing a style reminiscent of eighteenth-century English, the translation is in fact an attempt to maintain the distancing effect which the reader would have if he were able to understand the language of the source text. However, by modernizing the language, the translator is suggesting that the source text was contemporary to the source audience, and so the target text should be in the contemporary language of the target audience.

As mentioned in my strategic decisions, it seems an impossible, and perhaps unfruitful, task to try to recreate an English language as it would have been spoken in the eighteeth century. This approach has been adopted by translators in the past; Bassnett McGuire gives the example of the translations of William Morris (1834-96). His translations of Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* were deliberately archaic, but according to Bassnett McGuire they contained such peculiarities of language that they were considered confusing, and obscure (Bassnett-McGuire, 1080, p. 67). This is a problem I would be facing if my target text was deliberately styled to contain a number of archaisms; the fact that the text is designed for performance on stage is a further argument against too many archaisms, as the audience may not always follow what is being said, or may find the production rather boring. There is an artificiality in the recreation of eighteenth-century idiom; the dialogue would lose a degree of authenticity. In *Le Temps de l'oeuvre et le bel aujourd'hui*, Jean-Michel Deprats claims that archaism is not just confusing to the modern reader or audience, it can also discourage people from reading and enjoying past classics (Deprats, in Taylor *et al* (eds), 1996, pp. 108-109).

Is the solution then to use modern slang when translating dialogue which is markedly dated? Akerholt points out the danger of using modern slang, with reference to Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*:

> If the language is full of modern slang or is too modernised in its overall style, the translator faces the danger of turning the characters into people of our modern society. The public knows it is not dealing with a contemporary author, and a modern way of speech in an otherwise nineteenth-century setting may create paradoxical situations which will only confuse.
>
> In Zuber, 1980, p. 116.

This is exactly the problem I feel I would encounter if I were to translate *Le Galant escroc* into modern-day slang; the original 'saveur' of the eighteenth century would be lost, and I fear the familiar style would make the characters

appear vulgar and uncouth. My option of retaining some forms of archaism, and trying to have a neutral style (in that the language does not use slang words, but has some idiomatic phrases) is really a middle path between archaism and modernisation. This is an option which Franz H. Link sees as being a valid approach to solve the choice between *historicity* and *actuality.* In a study entitled *Translation, Adaptation and Interpretation of Dramatic Texts,* Link discusses the possibility of semi-modernizing the text:

> The text may be only slightly changed by substituting equivalents still familiar to a present-day audience for obsolete words and phrases and by speaking it in modern pronunciation. In this case the play would retain its original flavour and the audience may imagine itself to attend a performance as it was intended by its author or authors at the time they wrote their text.
>
> In Zuber, 1980, p. 27.

My argument for retaining some French vocabulary in my translation is also considered valid by Link:

> A comparable effect can be achieved by using foreign language phrases to insinuate the foreign origin of a character. It is not important that the language spoken is as close as possible to the original it is supposed to represent, but that the audience recognizes the author's intention of stylizing.
>
> Ibid., p. 30.

In my opinion, the key to achieving a balance between forms of archaism and moderization is that the target audience fully understands the language. It is easy, for example, for the audience to recognize forms of address such as Monsieur and Madame, but to retain the word *financier* in the translation may prove confusing to the contemporary reader, or listener. I do not see conscious archaism as a totally inappropriate approach to translating dated texts; everything depends on the the impression the translator wants to make on his target audience. The conclusion drawn by Déprats reflects this point entirely:

> L'archaïsation est une construction imaginaire par quoi s'établit une certaine figure du passé. La modernisation est une autre forme de mémoire par laquelle se noue un rapport différent au passé, mais elle n'échappe ni à l'histoire, ni à l'historicité. Dans les deux cas, la vérité de la traduction doit se concevoir non en termes d'adéquation mais en termes de manifestation.
>
> Deprats, in Taylor et al (eds), 1996, p. 119.

My choice of retaining some markers of archaisation is a manifestation of the language and customs of the period in question.

To sum up, then, my translation strategy is based on consideration of the author's presumed intentions in writing the play, and on giving my target audience an impression of what it may have been like to witness the play in eighteenth-century France. The language, costume and setting are ways in which I can give some hints of archaism to the TT, and also retain the impression that the action is taking place in France, as opposed to eighteenth-century Britain. My research into Collé's work, and the cultural and linguistic features of eighteenth-century French society enable me to make an educated interpretation of Collé's intentions and his audience reaction to certain comments in the play; it is a matter of making this interpretation clear to the target audience, without losing sight of the playability of the text.

7

Target Text and Points of Detail

THE NOBLE ART OF SEDUCTION[1]

COMEDY

CAST

THE COMTE DE GULPHAR, an impoverished nobleman. Roguish, yet charming and debonair.[2]

MONSIEUR GASPARIN, a tax farmer within the corrupt system of privileges in the eighteenth-century in France. Although extremely wealthy and influential, tax farmers were still seen as inferior in social terms by the members of the true nobility. Overweight, red-faced.[3]

MADAME GASPARIN, wife of the above and Sophie's aunt. An attractive woman in her late thirties. A buxom figure.[4]

SOPHIE, the niece of M. and Mme Gasparin. Pretty, young. In love with the chevalier.

THE CHEVALIER, nephew of the comte de Gulphar. In love with Sophie. A rather naive, but serious young man.[5]

The action takes place at the house of M. and Mme Gasparin. The room is ornately decorated in rococo style, with gold ornaments and a large mirror with a gilt frame to the left of the backdrop. In the centre of the stage is a red velvet sofa, or chaise longue.[6]

The characters are all dressed in eighteenth-century style costume. The comte is elegantly dressed, and wears a sword. M. Gasparin is dressed in a similar style, but in brighter, garish colours. The chevalier also wears a sword, and his clothes are plainer than the comte's.[7] Both Sophie and Mme Gasparin are wearing dresses which emphasize their cleavage. [8]

SCENE 1

THE COMTE DE GULPHAR, *alone. Holding a letter which he is reading out under his breath. It looks as though he's talking to the letter.*

My *dear* Mme Gasparin, you've got quite a way with words![9] You've arranged a proper meeting between us; I'm very impressed. I've wanted you for ages; now it looks like I'm going to have you...[10] You have a very affectionate style[11] – and I *mean* affectionate – but you expect a lot in return. How the devil do you expect *me* to come up with two thousand francs to replace the money you say you lost at the card table? I feel a lot of affection for you as well, but not *that* much. Two thousand francs![12] Who's going to lend me that kind of money? My good woman, the way you're treating me, you'd think I were a crooked tax farmer[13] like your husband.[14] Don't forget, I'm only a nobleman! Two thousand francs! That explains your advances towards me in the past month – indecent advances, at that! (*Winks to the audience as he makes the last remark, then looks back at the letter.*)[15] You were up to something all along. There I was thinking you wanted a soulmate, or that you were after my... *person*[16]... but it's my money you're really after... (*Looks up from the letter.*) I think I know what you're up to... (*Talking to the letter.*) Did you *really* lose all that money playing cards?[17]I don't think so; in fact, you created so much fuss over how I shouldn't tell anyone that I'll wager the whole thing's a lie. (*Looks up.*) Ah, here's the chevalier; he might be able to shed some light on the matter.

SCENE 2

Enter the chevalier.[18]

COMTE: Hello, young fellow.[19]

CHEVALIER: Good morning, uncle... I mean, Monsieur le Comte.[20]

COMTE: Whenever I want to see my own nephew[21] I have to come to M. Gasparin's house! Tell me something. I've been away[22] for the last five days. Have you heard anything about the lovely Mme Gasparin[23] losing two thousand francs playing cards?[24]

CHEVALIER, *indignantly*: I most certainly have not, sir. Nothing could be further from the truth.[25] It's nothing but a mischievous rumour. People are like that[26] – they've got nothing better to do than spread gossip about beautiful wives of tax farmers.

COMTE: Are you sure it's nothing more than a rumour?

CHEVALIER, *with enthusiasm*: Absolutely certain! As you know, from the very moment I fell in love with her niece, Sophie, I've never left Mme Gasparin's side.[27] These past ten days I've dined with her every evening – Mme Gasparin, I mean.[28] And for the past six days, I have had to partner Mme Gasparin at the card table! Under normal circumstances I would not have been upset, but my yearning to partner Sophie instead has made the whole painful experience stick in my mind![29]

COMTE, *with a knowing smile*: Well, that settles it then. It's all a slander![30]

CHEVALIER: Oh yes, it's most definitely a slander.

COMTE: All right then. Now tell me, dear boy, how's the love life?[31]

CHEVALIER, *passionately*: Oh sir, my love for Sophie grows stronger every minute of every day![32] Her beauty is there for all to see, but she has hidden qualities which are even more astounding. She's philosophical, you know,... and sensitive, and pretty, and strong and.. and helpless.[33] Oh sir, if Sophie were a man, she would be the perfect gentleman![34]

COMTE, *laughing*: My dear boy! It's obvious you haven't had a lot of experience where women are concerned! What a poet![35] Let's get to the point, my friend. Have you had the wench?[36] Have you?

CHEVALIER: What a thing to ask! No, sir, Sophie would never...

COMTE, *interrupting*: You're not telling! Don't tell me you still have moral values! Never mind, you'll get over it. But you have had her, haven't you, I can tell.[37]

CHEVALIER, *very indignant*: Monsieur![38] Do you think I would...

COMTE, *interrupting*: All right, all right. I'm not asking you to perjure yourself!

CHEVALIER, *with a serious, noble air*: Very well, sir, I shall get straight to the point and tell you in all seriousness that I have not 'had her';[39] and even if I had, I would consider myself a scoundrel if I...

COMTE: Told anyone?[40]

CHEVALIER: If I told anyone.

COMTE: You are wet behind the ears, aren't you![41] No-one makes a big secret of it nowadays. If you do it, talk about it.[42]

CHEVALIER: Fortunately, *I* have not sunk to such depths yet.

COMTE: Such depths! What an expression! You really ought to get out more, dear boy.[43] You've no idea of social etiquette.

CHEVALIER: Well, if etiquette is simply another word for moral depravity...[44]

COMTE: My dear boy, please spare me the sermon! The world's full of preachers nowadays![45]

CHEVALIER: Very well, sir, we shall talk of this no more. Let's discuss my marriage to Sophie instead. M. Gasparin's perfectly happy about the marriage, but his wife is another matter. I am simply not wealthy enough, and yet Sophie and I are a match made in Heaven.[46]

COMTE: Don't tell me you still want to get married?[47]

CHEVALIER, *very emotional*: Oh, monsieur, my whole life depends...[48]

COMTE, *interrupting*: Please, any more of this and you'll have me convinced you really haven't bedded the wench...[49] What? You haven't? You haven't bedded her? *I* don't know!

CHEVALIER, *proudly, and with an almost threatening look*: Monsieur le Comte, you may tease me as much as you like, but I beg of you, please show some respect for...

COMTE, *interrupting*: You're like something out of a novel![50] I simply can't let you get away with it. We'll just have to arrange the marriage and put an end to all your silly nonsense.[51]

CHEVALIER: Please sir, do let's be serious!

COMTE: I am being serious! I want this marriage to happen. Your only problem is Mme Gasparin's attitude to money (*laughing*) – and that's some problem, I can tell you![52] We'll have to win her round somehow.

CHEVALIER, *gushing*;[53] Sir, I would owe you my life! Sophie means the world to me.[54] She and I grew up together; she was promised to me before her family lost its fortune. One of her uncles left her two hundred thousand francs in his will, providing she marries someone of whom Mme Gasparin approves. I'll never meet her approval: she doesn't think I'm a rich enough match for her niece.

COMTE, *who has been lost in a dream during the chevalier's speech, now bursts out laughing*: Ha! Ha! Ha! Got it![55]

CHEVALIER: Why are you laughing, sir? Would you see me suffer more?[56]

COMTE: No, no, not at all. I've just thought of a plan which could solve both our problems... Chevalier, you shall marry Sophie!

CHEVALIER: How can you be so sure? What do you mean?

COMTE: I'm telling you, you shall marry her, there's no doubt about it. But I cannot reveal my plan... (*hears someone coming*.) That sounds like Gasparin; let me talk to him first of all, and come back this evening.

Exit Chevalier.

SCENE 3

COMTE, *alone*.

You know, my plan might just work! Not only would I be helping my dear nephew,[57] I'd be playing a splendid trick on the delectable[58] Mme Gasparin, and bedding her into the bargain! And it would be the perfect revenge on that wretched little tax farmer,[59] whose money's just won him the affections of my favourite little songbird[60] from the opera house. If these tax farmers keep throwing their money about,[61] there'll be no girls left for the rest of us. And if he's no money left to give to his wife, she'll ask *me* instead. (*Enter Gasparin*) Ah! The very man!

SCENE 4

COMTE: Gasparin, my *dear* fellow, it's a bit early to go out, is it not?

GASPARIN, *taking out his watch*: Indeed, monsieur le Comte, but I'll need a few hours[62] to arrange a romantic little tête-à-tête at my other apartment. Will you be joining us for dinner?

COMTE: I intend to. Actually, I'm glad I've caught you because I've something to tell you, and something to ask of you,[63] *dear* fellow.[64]

GASPARIN: Let's hear it then.

COMTE, *slight pause*: There's a... there's a... a *lady*[65] I know, lives in Paris, attractive woman, quite young, quite intelligent,[66] and I want her – have done for ages. Now the thing is, my friend, this lady could be mine for just two thousand francs. The whole thing's quite simple.

GASPARIN: Dear God![67] I thought you said she was a lady!

COMTE: She's bound to be! Her husband has an income of eighty thousand francs a year. If that doesn't make her a lady, what would?

GASPARIN: And she's willing to...[68]

COMTE: Oh, she's so willing, my *dear* fellow, that if you would only be so kind as to lend me the two thousand francs...[69]

GASPARIN: But, monsieur le comte...

COMTE, *slightly haughty*: But?... But what?[70]

GASPARIN: Please don't get me wrong; I'm quite prepared to lend you the money, but I have misgivings about giving it to you for something like this.You'd only regret it, and you'd blame me in the end...[71] Two thousand francs? For the love of God! A woman like that isn't worth it![72]

COMTE: Oh, she's certainly not worth it; I agree with you there.

GASPARIN: Never mind that she's a rich man's wife; she's nothing but a slut![73]

COMTE, *laughing*: A slut?[74] That's not what you'd call her if I told you who she was.

GASPARIN: Well tell me then; let's see if I know her.

COMTE: I can't. My conscience wouldn't allow it.

GASPARIN: You must be joking! Why worry about upsetting the likes of her?[75]

COMTE: You're right; she's hardly nobility,[76] and she's not exactly well-known; the only reason I won't tell you is because you know her.

GASPARIN: Really?... So...

COMTE, *rather impatiently*: So I'm not telling you.[77] Now, my *dear* fellow, about the money. Would you lend me the two thousand francs, or would you rather I went to the money lender? I'm beginning to[78]... The whole thing's driving me insane... I'm determined to...

GASPARIN, *handing over a purse of money*: Good God in Heaven! I can't let you go to a money lender. Here you are; here's two thousand francs I've just confiscated. I was going to use it for cards, but there's plenty more where that came from.[79]

COMTE, *with fake humility*: I'm much obliged...[80]

GASPARIN: I still have my doubts, mind...

COMTE, *steps closer to Gasparin, lowers his voice as though someone else might be eavesdropping*:[81] Don't worry, dear fellow, I'll try to bed her for nothing. You can always haggle with the likes of her, can't you?[82]

GASPARIN, *loudly, slaps the Comte on the back*:[83] You certainly can! Good God, try and get her for nothing; you'd enjoy it all the more. But I must be on my way. (*Starts to leave.*)

COMTE, *grabs him gently, yet firmly by the arm*: By the way, I almost forgot. About Sophie and the chevalier; why not let them get married. Let's unite the poor things and put them out of their misery!

GASPARIN: Hell and damnation![84] It's obvious that the chevalier can't wait to marry Sophie! It's not just because of the two hundred thousand francs held in trust for her by her aunt, or that she's probably our sole remaining heiress. It's because she's absolutely adorable... She's got the temperament of an angel; anyone would tell you that... and she's so kind-hearted... a sensitive soul...[85] and that's the deadliest weapon a woman can have nowadays, let me tell you! But whether Sophie and the chevalier marry or not depends entirely on Madame Gasparin. Try and win her round. She'll listen to you; I'll help you. Now, if you don't mind, I really must go...

Exit Gasparin.

COMTE, *in Gasparin's direction*: She'll listen to me all right, now that I've got your money.

SCENE 5

COMTE, *alone*.

This is sublime! Wonderful! A beloved husband lending me the money to bed his wife! Unbelievable! And the wife's probably going to act the part of one of those sensitive souls he's just been talking about; she'll be caressing me with one hand, and stabbing me in the back with the other.[86] I'm going to make the most of this. I'll push things as far as I want. The ever-gullible Gasparin[87]: he really is a bit of an imbecile. He's one of those coarse tax farmers of the old school;[88] can't see beyond their noses, and the only sound they recognize is

the jingling of money in their fat purses.[89] (*Enter Mme Gasparin.*) But here comes the delicious Madame Gasparin.[90]

SCENE 6

MME GASPARIN, *with obvious restraint*: Monsieur le Comte, you're here at last! I've been most anxious to see you.

COMTE, *assuming the air of a man deeply in love*: And I you, my Queen.[91] I've just returned from the country; I flew on the wings of love to obey your command and bring you the two thousand francs you[92]... (*Taking out the purse which Gasparin has just given him.*)

MME GASPARIN, *interrupting him*: Please, monsieur,[93] would you have me blush?[94] (*Takes out her fan, covers her face but for the eyes.*)[95]

COMTE: Blush, Madame? Why should you blush? Do the flames of passion you have lit within me warm your fair cheeks? (*Stands close behind her.*)[96] Your letter led me to believe you at least appreciated the heat.[97]

MME GASPARIN, *pretending to be embarrassed, gently fans herself*: When I wrote you that letter, I had been driven to the point of distraction. I had suffered such a reversal of fortune at the card table, and I could see no means of retrieving my loss. I've always held you in such high esteem that my first thought was to turn to you...[98]

COMTE, *still standing behind her, gently strokes her arm*: And who better to turn to, Madame.[99]

MME GASPARIN, *takes a nervous step forward, but still smiling*: Forgive me, monsieur. I now see what dangers I would be exposing myself to by being so much in your debt.

COMTE: Dangers, Madame? What dangers, pray? Is it not the most natural thing in the world to turn in your hour of need to the one man whose love for you knows no limits? You must know how far I'm willing to go; the truth is, I would do anything for you![100]

MME GASPARIN: But that's what frightens me. Rather than *testing* your limits,[101] I've decided it would be better all round if I were to sell some of my diamonds. That's what I've been wanting to tell you...

COMTE, *pretending to be cross*: No need to continue, Madame, you don't love me, you've made that perfectly clear. I was wrong; I read too much into your letter. I thought your complete trust in me was a sign of your love, but I can see now I simply have a vivid imagination. You don't love me at all, you'll never love me... I don't think I've ever been so unhappy![102]

MME GASPARIN, *tenderly, bashfully*: Or so wrong!

COMTE, *with feigned emotion, eagerly*: Madame, life is worth living again! Just promise me one thing: abandon all thoughts of selling your precious diamonds. (*Shows her the purse.*) I have in my possession the means to spare you such unpleasantness. I implore you, Madame, don't do it. I simply won't hear of it.

MME GASPARIN, *in dulcet tones*: Please, sir, I beg you not to insist. For the sake of decorum...[103]

COMTE, *interrupting her sharply, yet with delicacy*: Decorum? How can you talk of decorum when you can see how devastated I am by your refusal to accept my help? If I were so hesitant about matters of the heart, do you not think that I might be thinking that you think the pleasure of helping you is actually costing me something?[104] (*Turns his back on Mme Gasparin, with a knowing smile to the audience.*)[105] I can tell you now, it's not costing me a thing! Not one solitary thing!

MME GASPARIN, *provocatively*: Monsieur le Comte! The more I hear of your *noble* intentions,[106] the more you arouse... my... my gratitude...[107]

COMTE: Gratitude? I beg of you, don't use such a banal expression. I love you madly, passionately![108] Dare I hope that you have at least some feelings for me? If you say you do, you won't have to say anything more. Forget all those words like gratitude and decorum.[109] Love, true love: that's what we're

dealing with. Love makes everyone equal; not even money stands in the way of true love.

MME GASPARIN, *tenderly*: I should have done as I intended and not see you. You're capable of convincing me of anything!

COMTE, *obviously pleased*: How could you even think of refusing to see me! I ought to take offence. (*Kisses her hand.*) But I don't like quarrelling. You're very lucky I'm not one for all those tedious lover's tiffs. (*Draws her closer.*)

MME GASPARIN, *drops fan to the floor*: Oh you're right, it's so much better to live in peace...

SCENE 7

Enter Sophie and the chevalier.

COMTE, *aside, upon noticing them*: Witnesses! What a stroke of luck! (*To Mme Gasparin, handing her the purse.*) There are two thousand francs in this purse, Madame. Be so kind as to return them to your husband, with my *gratitude*.[110]

MME GASPARIN, *aside, while the comte greets Sophie*: He must have seen them coming. He's thrown them off the scent – he's such a clever man! (*To the comte, tenderly.*) I acknowledge your *gratitude*, sir, and I believe I owe you something to show that payment has been received.[111]

COMTE, *with a wry smile*: That would be much appreciated, Madame.

MME GASPARIN: Let's retire to my chambers; I won't rest until we've concluded our business together.[112]

COMTE: Lead the way, Madame. (*In a low voice to Sophie and the chevalier.*) Don't worry, children. I'm off to further the good cause.[113]

SCENE 8[114]

SOPHIE, *eagerly*: Now that we're alone at last,[115] perhaps you can tell me what the comte has planned to persuade my aunt into letting us get married?

CHEVALIER: Dearest Sophie,[116] all he's told me is that the plan cannot fail; he didn't say what he intended doing. Oh Sophie, let's get married in secret; then no-one can tear my heart apart.[117]

SOPHIE, *firmly, yet affectionately*: No, chevalier, I would never ask you to do that for me.

CHEVALIER: But I'd sacrifice everything for you.

SOPHIE: I won't let you.[118] If my aunt refuses to give her blessing I won't be a suitable match for you. Without her blessing we won't get the money which is due to me;[119] she can give me everything, and I want it, for you.

CHEVALIER: But I've told you your fortune means nothing to me; all I want is to have you for my wife. Do you not... Are you saying...?[120]

SOPHIE, *interrupting him*: Why such doubts, chevalier? They offend me, when my every act has been to dispel such doubts.

CHEVALIER: My darling, sweet Sophie![121] Your soothing words are music to my ears.[122] You give so much to me, which is why I want to give everything to you.

SOPHIE, *decisively*: But as long as I know you love me, I do have everything. I don't doubt your love, and I've no fear of losing you. And the more I lay myself open to you...[123] (*sits on the sofa, reaches out her hand to invite him to sit beside her*) the more certain I am of your love and integrity.

CHEVALIER, *shuffles his feet nervously*: Indeed! And the more you lay yourself open to me, the more I long for the honour of being your husband.

SOPHIE, *determined*: And you shall be my husband,[124] but not in secret. My aunt must concede once she realizes that nothing will shake my fidelity and my determination... I'm relying on you to be just as determined... (*Tenderly.*) And you are! My dear chevalier, you can't bear to live without me, I can read your very thoughts, just as you can read mine.[125]

CHEVALIER, *passionately*: Oh Sophie, not only do you read my thoughts, you penetrate my very soul![126] I adore you, Sophie, I simply adore you. And I

know how much you adore me. It's not just what you say, it's what you do... One sigh, one look, and you transport my soul to hidden realms of happiness.[127]

SOPHIE, *gently pulls the chevalier towards her, rests his head on her bosom*: So why not explore some of those realms while we can, there's so much left for us to discover...

CHEVALIER, *raises his head quickly*: No, Sophie, no. We can only begin our journey once we get married. Would that there were stronger chains than those of marriage to bind us together!... (*Puts head on her chest again, then steps back quickly as he realizes what he's doing.*) Would you care to be at the mercy of gossipmongers? If our lack of patience were discovered, the fact that we were married would shelter you from the rumours of this scandalous society.[128]

SOPHIE, *with dignity*: And what is the judgement of others to me? (*Holds him close to her, pulls him onto the sofa.*)[129] You mean everything to me; you're all I care about in the world; nothing else matters... Love has blinded me to everything but you.

CHEVALIER, *holds her, touching her back, her shoulders, obviously nervous*: Such strength, such purity, such dignity, such integrity of soul! I'm overcome with love and admiration!

SOPHIE, *very tender, ardently*: Before I was sure that you loved me as much as I loved you... because I did fall in love with you first, didn't I?... before I was sure, anyway, I took great pride in resisting you... (*Leans onto him, the chevalier almost falling off the sofa.*) But now I take great pride in taking the initiative, in giving myself up to you completely, and in doing nothing to quench the flames of your passion, and those you've lit within me...[130] (*Sits up straight, the chevalier tries to regain his composure.*)[131] As I've told you many times before, I've never believed that a woman's virtue lay in resisting the advances of the man she loves... (*Leans onto him again.*) My admiration, my trust and my love for you have strengthened my resolve to show my true feelings; I refuse to be

one of those women who blushes at the very thought of giving herself to her lover.[132] My honour, my duty and my virtue consist in loving you, not in resisting you. My happiness is complete, knowing that you love me as much as I love you, if such a thing is possible.

CHEVALIER, *kneels before her*: Oh Sophie! My darling Sophie! I didn't know that words alone could make me feel so elated... so... satisfied.[133] When you talk about your love, and your pride in surrendering yourself completely to me, I feel a stirring within me which I've never felt before... (*Puts head on her lap.*) Oh Sophie, satisfy my desire. Let's get married in secret.

SCENE 9

Enter M. Gasparin, catches the chevalier by surprise kneeling before Sophie.

GASPARIN: Good God in Heaven, what's going on here? *(Pulls the chevalier to his feet by the scruff of the neck.)*[134] Have you two gone completely mad? Well, answer me then? What would have happened if my wife, no less, had caught you in such a delicate position? A respectable lady like her would have been shocked![135] And you, chevalier, you've got some nerve! It's a good job my wife's otherwise occupied – at least it was me who caught you![136]

SOPHIE, *flustered*: Oh uncle, please try to see things...

CHEVALIER, *interrupting Sophie abruptly*: Monsieur, monsieur. Please, talk to Madame Gasparin. We are desperate to obtain her approval![137]

GASPARIN: You're desperate all right.[138] Maybe a quick wedding's not such a bad idea. But you know as well as I do that my good lady's not too generous where money's concerned. (*Sees his wife and the comte in the background.*) Here she is now, with M. le Comte. Come back in a minute or two. We couldn't discuss your marriage properly in your presence, my little lovebirds.

CHEVALIER, *quietly to Sophie*: I hope M. le Comte's managed to do the job.

SOPHIE, *quietly*: Look at that smile on his face; it certainly looks as though he got what he wanted.[139]

Exit the chevalier and Sophie, just as Mme Gasparin and the comte enter.

SCENE 10

GASPARIN: Where have you two been? (*To Mme Gasparin.*) You must really like that damned boudoir of yours, Madame, if you're willing to stay in there in this heat.

COMTE: We've not been there long, dear fellow. I've only just got in.[140]

MME GASPARIN, *hurriedly to M. Gasparin*: That's right. M. le Comte hasn't been here long.

GASPARIN, *to the Comte*: So I take it then that your little transaction[141] didn't take place, seeing as you're back so soon?

COMTE: What do you mean, so soon? I may only have left you a short time ago, but that's more than enough time for an expert such as I[142] to get the job done! Don't worry, dear fellow. Let's just say I've secured my end.[143]

MME GASPARIN: What are you talking about?

GASPARIN: So he hasn't told you what he's been up to? He's had some dealings with a very respectable lady of our own social circle – she's propositioned him, in fact. But we'll tell you about it in a minute. (*To the comte.*) Right now all I want to know is whether you're satisfied,[144] Monsieur le Comte.

COMTE: *Extremely* satisfied, my good man. (*Takes M. and Mme Gasparin by the arm, draws them closer.*)[145] For a start, she must be one of the most desirable women in Paris.

GASPARIN: Ha! That's nothing to brag about. I mean, look at Mme Gasparin; she's no oil painting,[146] but she's still a desirable woman.

MME GASPARIN: Please dear, don't talk like that. (*In a low voice to the comte.*) Have you lost your mind? You can't joke about a thing like this!

GASPARIN, *to the Comte*: So come on then, what happened?

COMTE, *stares at Mme Gasparin while her husband is looking the other way*:[147] Well dear fellow, I got to see it all;[148] her gorgeous complexion! Her deep brown

eyes!... she's got the prettiest hands, the most beautiful arms, a lovely neck, the biggest... (*as he looks at Mme Gasparin's cleavage.*)[149]

MME GASPARIN: Stop, sir! Spare me such intimate details! (*Under her breath.*) Have you gone completely mad?

GASPARIN: Let him finish, woman.[150] I could understand you being miffed if he was discussing assets you didn't have; but for Heaven's sake, you've got a lovely neck on you.[151] So stop interrupting him. You were saying, Sir?

COMTE: What *was* I saying? Oh yes, she's got the most radiant complexion, a very nice figure... (*Looks again at her cleavage.*) Hidden charms...

MME GASPARIN: I've heard quite enough, gentlemen! That's no way to talk about a lady. I'm no prude, but no self-respecting woman is capable of listening to such foolish nonsense! I shall leave you, gentlemen.

GASPARIN: And all because we're being complimentary about another woman? You're all the same. If it was you we were talking about, running away would be the last thing you'd think of doing!

MME GASPARIN: That's not it at all; it's just all getting a bit personal! (*In a low voice to the Comte.*) Stop this nonsense, you're starting to worry me!

GASPARIN: What's she whispering? Don't listen to her. Carry on.

COMTE: I wouldn't want to upset Madame any further, so I'll add only this: she's a lively, vivacious woman, and yet she can be so *considerate*[152] when the moment arises!

GASPARIN, *to his wife*: Ah well, that's where the comparison ends, Madame.

MME GASPARIN: And why bother comparing me to her anyway, Sir?[153]

GASPARIN, *to the Comte*: You know, Mme Gasparin's like a statue when the moment arises, as you put it. A beautiful marble statue, mind. But that's about all she is.[154]

COMTE, *smiles knowingly at Mme Gasparin*: Well, the woman I'm talking about's not like that at all; in fact, she's the exact opposite!

GASPARIN: My loss, I suppose. It's a pity – right up until the last moment there we could have been talking about my wife.[155] Anyway, how did it all end?

COMTE, *suddenly serious, sounding a little conceited*: I've said all there is to say, my friend; I'm in love with the woman... totally and utterly in love!

MME GASPARIN, *anxiously*: You, Monsieur le Comte? In love?[156]

COMTE, *conceitedly, mockingly*: In love, Madame, to the point of losing my sanity. And I've every reason to believe that she burns with passion[157] for me also. She adores me.

GASPARIN, *laughing ironically*: Oh, she adores you, does she? And I'm supposed to believe that? It didn't exactly stop her from taking your two thousand francs, did it? (*To Mme Gasparin*.) I didn't tell you about that part of the bargain did I?[158] (*To the Comte*.) Let me get this right; she adores you, but she took your money anyway?

COMTE: Oh, she didn't take the money, dear fellow; she gave me back your two thousand francs; I've just given them to your *dear* lady wife,[159] as Sophie and the chevalier will testify. It's even in the very purse you gave me.

MME GASPARIN, *aside*: The scoundrel![160]

GASPARIN: Do you have my two thousand francs, Madame?

MME GASPARIN, *hesitant, looking very embarrassed*: I have, Sir... Indeed I do...

COMTE: The only reason Madame was in her boudoir was to put the money away in the little cabinet beside her bed.[161]

MME GASPARIN, *aside*: How could I have been so gullible?[162]

GASPARIN: In that case, Madame, perhaps you would do me the honour of returning my two thousand francs? (*Sees her hesitating*.) Well, Madame?

MME GASPARIN, *sulkily*: Of course, Sir, I'll get it now. I'm hardly going to keep it, am I?...[163] (*To the Comte, as she leaves*.) You brute!

Exit Mme Gasparin.

SCENE 11

COMTE: Now, my dear friend, I think this is the opportune moment[164] to persuade your charming wife to let the chevalier marry Sophie, don't you think?

GASPARIN: Yes, yes, whatever. But tell me, Monsieur le Comte, how in devil's name did you manage to get your money back?

COMTE, *aside*: How do I explain this? (*Looks embarrassed*.) Well, dear fellow, I simply... I simply happened to come across a woman with a sense of fair play, who knows when she's on to a good thing.[165]

GASPARIN: Meaning?

COMTE: Well, at first she took the money.

GASPARIN: So why did she give it back?

COMTE: As I said, she knew she was on to a good thing... She felt she had to pay me back for... services rendered...[166]

GASPARIN, *bursts out laughing*: Come on, stop playing me for a fool![167]

COMTE: Would I do that? Would that be any way to treat the dear friend who was so generous enough to lend me the money in the first place?

GASPARIN: Oh come on, you're not telling me it's all true?

COMTE: That's exactly what I'm telling you; I'll never find another woman prepared to show such generosity, such... *gratitude*;[168] she took great pride in doing what she thought was right.

GASPARIN, *laughing*: That's priceless! Now there's a woman *any* man could look up to. That's what I call a woman of virtue.

COMTE: And there you have it. That's how you get a woman to hand back your money, or not take it in the first place.

GASPARIN: Monsieur, please extend my finest compliments to the woman you've just had.[169]

COMTE: Consider it done.[170]

GASPARIN: I didn't realize you were such a talented man.

COMTE: You only had to ask around; any woman would have told you.

SCENE 12

Enter Mme Gasparin, carrying the money. Hands it over reluctantly.

MME GASPARIN: There's your money, Sir, take it.

COMTE: My word! Your money's been returned with such good grace that you ought to let your dear lady wife keep it; she's certainly earned it.[171]

GASPARIN, *taking back the purse*: On the contrary, my dear fellow. I'm hoping she's the one willing to part with some money, by agreeing to let Sophie and the chevalier marry.

MME GASPARIN, *sulkily*: If I've told you once, Sir, I've told you a hundred times: the chevalier is nowhere near wealthy enough for...

COMTE, *interrupting her*: But my *dear* lady, don't forget he comes from a long line of nobles, and he's related to *me*... He's a cavalry captain at 22! Good Lord! What more could you ask for? All we need is a war, then he'll have his own regiment.[172]

GASPARIN: The Comte's right; trust him.

MME GASPARIN, *abruptly*: Not this time![173]

COMTE, *imposingly*: I'm sure I can find a way to persuade you otherwise, Madame. M. Gasparin, would you mind fetching the young lovers? Let them plead for mercy at her feet. While you're gone...

GASPARIN, *interrupting him, eagerly*: I'll get them right away; we'll throw ourselves at her feet, we'll... we'll... I'll go and get them.[174]

Exit Gasparin.

SCENE 13

COMTE, *calmly*: Now, Madame, surely you can see how keen I am for the marriage to take place. Might I be wrong in thinking you owe me a small favour?[175]

MME GASPARIN, *indignantly*: After what you've just done? I despise you, Sir. I didn't deserve such humiliation.What else can you expect but for me to depise you?[176]

COMTE, *with cold sarcasm*: My dear lady, you exaggerate...

MME GASPARIN, *interrupting him angrily*: Why shouldn't I hate you, Sir?[177] You've betrayed my trust and broken my heart! You were heartless enough to take advantage of my unbelievable bad luck at the card table! But you had to go one step further, didn't you? You made me the object of the most cruel, heartless practical joke! in front of my huband as well!...[178] And after all that, you have the cool nerve to ask a favour of me, when you should be trembling in fear of my revenge?

COMTE, *still very self-assured*: Oh, it's revenge you're after, is it? Calm down, Madame. I haven't used you as badly as you say. I suspected right from the start that that story about the cards was a complete fabrication.[179] And my suspicions have since been confirmed.

MME GASPARIN, *aside*: Damn him to Hell![180] How did he find out?

COMTE, *with cold calculation, even more exaggerated than before*: Besides, Madame, we should never quarrel with someone who knows our little secret,[181] should we?... Obviously I'm too much of a gentleman to take advantage of the situation, and believe me, I would never dream...

MME GASPARIN, *impetuously*: Believe *me*,[182] Sir, you wouldn't get away with it. The women will all take my side; it's in all their interest not to lend weight to such rumours. They'll make sure people see your stories for what they really are: vicious lies and the most outrageous slander.[183]

COMTE: On the contrary, Madame; I believe that through jealousy and envy they'll believe anything I have to say about you.

MME GASPARIN, *aside*: He's right, that's exactly what'll happen.

COMTE, *in a bitter, mocking tone*: Even if they don't, I have in my possession a letter written by your own fair hand, which would be very convincing proof

of the whole cruel story. But of course, I won't read read that letter to anyone. As I've already told you, I'm too much of a gentleman to repeat the story – whether in prose or verse, although I'm no mean songwriter,[184] even if I do say so myself. It would be so nasty of me to write a song about you, though... I couldn't bring myself to do it, I just couldn't... (*smiles at her, trying to look angelic.*)

MME GASPARIN: Beastly man![185] You would do it, and a lot more besides...

COMTE, *relaxed and matter-of-fact*: No, Madame, please, let me stop you there. Give my nephew your consent to marry Sophie, and I give you my word that I'll never tell anyone what happened between us, not even using false names. You have my word of honour, and I'll return your letter.[186]

SCENE 14

Enter Gasparin, Sophie and the chevalier.

GASPARIN: Mme Gasparin, take pity on the poor little darlings! Don't they just break your heart?

CHEVALIER, *throwing himself at Mme Gasparin's feet*: Oh Madame,[187] make me the happiest man alive!

SOPHIE, *also throws herself at Mme Gasparin's feet*: Oh Madame, if you could only find it in your heart...

GASPARIN, *heartrendingly*: Oh please, Madame, do I have to... (*about to kneel down also.*)

COMTE, *imposing and masterful*: Come Madame, surely such outpouring of emotion and all the reasons I've just given you are more than enough to dispel your doubts.[188]

MME GASPARIN, *with an air of constraint*: Very well, then, I consent to your marriage, since it means so much to you;... and since it means I've gained a friend in M. le Comte... (*In a low voice to M. le Comte.*) Give me back that damned letter![189]

COMTE, *in a low voice, takes letter from his pocket and hands it to her*: As promised!... (*Aloud.*) Oh Madame, I am forever in your debt![190] (*Aside.*) She's more afraid of me than in love with me!

CHEVALIER, *gushing*: Oh Madame, how can we ever thank you!

SOPHIE: Oh Madame, how can we ever repay such generosity![191]

GASPARIN, *good-heartedly to Sophie and the chevalier*: Let's not get carried away, children.[192] (*To the Comte.*) M. le Comte, I'm beginning to think you've got quite a way with women;[193] you could get my wife to do anything; it didn't take you long to persuade her to say yes. I only asked you to try her this afternoon!...[194] (*To Mme Gasparin.*) What do you think, Madame? He can certainly turn on the charm when he wants to, eh?[195]

MME GASPARIN, *looking embarrassed*: I'm not an unreasonable woman, you know! I'll agree to anything, as long as I know what's going on.[196]

GASPARIN: At last you're seeing sense; wonders will never cease! I think it's my turn now to make a grand gesture... (*Taking the two thousand francs from his pocket and giving them to Sophie.*) This is the two thousand francs which M. le Comte was so kind to return to me; I'd like to offer them to Sophie as an engagement present.

SOPHIE, *taking the purse*: I'm very grateful, uncle. I'd like to say how deeply grateful I am to you and my aunt for agreeing to the marriage. You've made me the happiest woman alive.[197]

GASPARIN: What a noble[198] thing to say!... My dear children, may you always be in love, and always be happy. (*To the Comte.*) And the same goes for you, M. le Comte, and the woman you've found. What a sensitive soul...[199]

MME GASPARIN: Yes, yes, of course. Let's forget all that, and send for the notary.

COMTE: What a good idea. But first, the epilogue.[200]

CHEVALIER

Life is full of laughter
When your lover treats you well;
Live happy ever after,[201]
Wherever you may dwell.
The stars above will seem so bright[202]
That you can't tell day from night:
That's the meaning of love.[203]

GASPARIN

A woman who is giving
Might give you back your money,
Then you're really living
In the land of milk and honey.
Just remind her by the way
How rich you are in every way:
That's what I call love.[204]

SOPHIE

They say that love is blind
Well, I don't quite agree,
For things go through his mind
Which you can often see.
But when your lover's straight and true
Be sure to love him in all you do:
That's the meaning of love.

MME GASPARIN, *to the comte.*

When you're smug and handsome,

You can use your charm
To hold a woman to ransom[205]
And never come to harm.
Nothing ventured, nothing gained,
Every woman can be obtained:
That's the meaning of love.

COMTE, *to Mme Gasparin*.

Love 'em and leave 'em quickly;[206]
That's what you want to do.
Once you've had her physically,
Leave without further ado.
Never faithful to any wench,
Especially if you're noble and French:
That's the meaning of love.

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1 As mentioned in my translation strategy, it is the title which will first entice an audience to watch the play, particularly as the author is unknown. Having decided that the comte is the central character in the play, and should be reflected in the title as such (as in the source text), I did not want to shift the emphasis too much. A more literal translation such as The Galant Scoundrel sounded rather flat; the word scoundrel is slightly dated, however, in the sense of describing a gentleman who has mistreated a lady, and so this is in keeping with the hints of archaism which I want to retain in the target text. A more idiomatic translation is The Lovable Rogue. I did prefer this title to the above, but the expression has now become so much of a cliché that I felt it detracted from the originality of the play. The title I decided upon is a form of compensation; it is more eye-catching, and sounds more natural an expression in English than The Galant Scoundrel, for example. It also picks up on the social status of the main characters. The comte is a nobleman and behaves like a noble. The audience may not make an immediate connection, but the notion is echoed in the opening scene by the declaration that he is not a financier, he is a nobleman. The subsequent differences in register and costume, along with the various comments made about the financiers in the play, will then reinforce the social differences between the characters.

2 By moving the comte to the head of the cast list and mentioning his social status, this again reinforces the reference in the title to his being a nobleman. The target audience needs more information about the social status of the characters, in particular the comte and Gasparin. The eighteenth-century audience will have understood the possible tension between the nobility and the financiers: the target audience needs more explicit details in order to have some understanding of the various comments made by the comte, for example, throughout the play. Although it is impossible to recreate

the empathy the source audience may have felt with the comte, my additions can at least go some way to clarifying the situation.

I also felt it was necessary to add in the description 'roguish, yet charming and debonair' as the title I have chosen does not indicate the dual aspect of the comte's personality. If the cast list is retained in this form in the theatre programme, it gives the target audience a chance to assess the situation before the play begins.

3 My aim here was to convey two pieces of information: the fact that Gasparin's business dealings were not altogether honest, and the ambiguity of his social status. Again, this is a form of compensation; all this information would have been conveyed to the source audience in the word financier. Although this greatly lengthens the character description, I feel it is necessary at this point to explain in brief details the social background.

The added descripton of Gasparin's being overweight and red-faced is perhaps not necessary, but I feel the physical detail lends more depth to the character. The fact that he is overweight suggests that he is both wealthy and greedy; the red face makes him seem bumptious, which is in keeping with the comte's description of him in Scene 5.

4 As Mme Gasparin is not portrayed as a ridiculous, vain older woman, I thought it was fitting to suggest that she was attractive and quite young. The comte's description of her in Scene 10 as having 'un embonpoint raisonnable, des trésors' suggests that she is buxom – having her slightly plumpish also conjurs up the idea of her eating well, like her husband. To have Mme Gasparin as a rather willowy figure does not fit in with the image of her as being a strong, capable woman, despite her claims to the contrary in Scene 6.

5 The additions again prepare the audience for the difference in personality between the comte and the chevalier. Although this will hopefully become obvious during Scene 2, it means my target audience (and the

director and actors) are more prepared for what is in store. Collé's audience will have been aware of his previous work, and known how the characters were to have been played. This would have been clear to them even from the choice of actor Collé would have made, as some actors in the social circle would have been better known for certain roles.

6 As mentioned in my strategic decisions, the scenery would not have been specified by Collé, as there would have been no apparent need for it to be. If I wish to convey an eighteenth-century setting, however, some indication is necessary. The reasons for including the mirror and sofa will become clearer at a later point in the translation.

7 Costume is a further indication of their social status. As noblemen, both the chevalier and the comte are entitled to carry swords; even though the target audience may not be aware of this, it is still a means of differentiating between the noblemen and the financier. The fact that Gasparin has a similar style of clothes shows that he is modelling himself on the comte, but he fails as the garish colours show lack of taste. The chevalier's clothes are plainer than the comte's to indicate his slightly lower social status, his lack of money, and also his less flirtatious ways with women.

8 This detail is particularly important as concerns Mme Gasparin; the comte makes several comments about her ample bosom, and she gets extremely embarrassed in Scene 10 when the comte describes her figure to Gasparin. It may also be an important aspect of Sophie's appearance; the chevalier is trying hard in Scene 8 to play the part of the gentleman, but it is obvious that they are attracted to one another. Even if Sophie just leans towards him, it may be enough to make the chevalier seem flustered, showing his lack of experience where women are concerned.

9 The opening sentence of this speech is an example of how I want the dialogue to sound natural. Rather than having a more literal translation such

as 'You write very well', I opted for a more idiomatic expression. The actual sense is not changed as such; it is important, though, that the comte's enthusiasm and admiration for this woman is obvious through the language he uses. The 'eh! mais...' is a good example of the tonal markers in French which cannot always be directly translated in English. It is a case of identifying, and trying to capture, the same tone in the target text.

10 The comte's expression 'j'ai envie de vous avoir' is explicit compared with the chevalier's description of his feelings for Sophie in Scene 2, for example. The chevalier reacts indignantly when the comte asks the question 'l'as-tu?'; it is familiar language, typical of that which would have been acceptable for private theatre performances, rather than the royal theatre. I wanted to retain the element of familiarity without having the comte appearing lecherous. The syllable count is also noticeable in the ST; the sentence is almost equally divided, with thirteen syllables in the first half, and fourteen in the second. The comte sounds quite calculating at this point; he is weighing up his chances, and trying to work out the full significance of the letter. Consequently, I wanted to have a sentence which sounded quite balanced – i.e. the first half was not noticeably longer than the second, and vice-versa.

11 As the word 'tendre' occurs three lines later, I wanted to use an adjective or noun which would be suitable in both instances. The repetition is quite important as the comte is comparing her outward show of affection (what she has written in the letter) to his show of affection (the money she has asked for).

12 My target audience would not recognize 'louis' as currency; they would associate the name with past kings of France. Therefore, I decided to use the term 'francs' instead, as at least this is instantly recognizable by the audience. I did not feel it was particularly important to estimate how much

200 louis would have been, and convert this into francs; what is more important is that the audience gets the impression that Mme Gasparin is asking for rather a large sum of money – hence the change from two hundred to two thousand in translation.

13 As mentioned before, the ST audience would understand the implied reference to Gasparin's being dishonest, whereas my target audience will not immediately understand the point being made. In order to compensate for the target audience's lack of background knowledge, I chose to add the word 'crooked'. Although the reference is less subtle than the original comment, it does not leave the target audience confused about the possible social comment being made.

14 I have introduced the information about Mme Gasparin's husband at an earlier stage as a means of compensation for the fact that my target audience is much less aware of the existing tension and rivalry between the nobles and *financiers*. The comte's comment is the first sign of this rivalry, and the additional information in my TT means that the audience is more prepared for the underlying tension which exists between the comte and Gasparin.

15 The implied stage direction in the ST is that the comte looks directly at the audience as he says the comment in brackets; I have simply made the stage direction more explicit. In terms of eighteenth-century theatre, the comte is talking in a very familiar way to the audience – indicating that he winks to them is a physical means of suggesting the familiarity, over and above what he actually says. To a modern audience, he is not really saying anything shocking, but the situation would have been quite different two centuries ago. Although my intention is not to produce an equivalent sense of 'shocking language' for a modern audience, I feel every now and again there

is a need to show the sense of intimacy and familiarity which is a feature of the comte's monologues.

16 The more dated expression using 'person', rather than 'body', makes the comte sound more pompous, as though he were shocked. This strengthens the impression of the comte's hypocrisy, as it becomes obvious later in the play that his only concern is with managing to sleep with Mme Gasparin.

17 I did not feel it was necessary to retain the 'Tell me, Mme Gasparin' in the TT, as the audience already knows this is her letter, so there is no real need to repeat her name. Again, I felt the ST phrase was more of a tonal marker; the comte really does not say anything with the 'Ah çà, Madame Gasparin, répondez-moi.'

18 Even though I am retaining the original divisions of scene which are a convention of French theatre, I think it is important to meet the expectations of the British director and actors in that a stage direction indicates when a new character comes on or goes off stage.

19 If I were to translate 'mon petit chevalier' literally by 'my little chevalier', it sounds condescending, and in fact a little camp. The 'petit' is a term of endearment, and a clear indication that the chevalier is quite young; my main concern here was that the comte sounded quite informal and relaxed, as indeed he is throughout this scene in comparison with the chevalier. The comte also addresses the chevalier as 'tu', whereas the chevalier calls the comte 'vous'. This is most likely to be an indication of their age difference, although it is in keeping with the chevalier's tendency to follow convention. As there is no equivalent linguistic marker in English, their different attitudes towards one another must be apparent in their choice of vocabulary.

20 The word 'salut' had a different usage in the eighteenth century; it is the equivalent of a formal greeting, rather than the much less formal usage nowadays. The chevalier's greeting is not as relaxed as the comte's, which is why I made the distinction between 'hello' and 'good morning'. During this scene the chevalier is trying to answer the comte's questions in a way that he thinks a gentleman should, rather than simply exchanging gossip with his uncle. He chooses his words carefully, but sometimes he is thrown off guard. He addresses the comte by his full title here, which shows his attempt to stick to convention. In order to indicate to the target audience that the chevalier sound slightly awkward, I decided to have him correcting himself right from the beginning, deliberately making sure he does not call the comte his uncle. I did not, however, find it necessary to use the name Gulphar; it is not a common French name and I think the audience will recognize M. le comte as a form of address.

21 Although it is not specified in the play whether the two men are as closely related as uncle and nephew, making them more closely related makes the comte's interest in the chevalier's welfare more plausible.

22 To use 'I've been in the country' suggests that he had been abroad before, and had retuned five days ago. The comte is most likely to have been visiting friends in the country and had just returned to Paris; as this detail is not particularly important, I did not feel it was necessary to have a lengthier explanation, other than that he had been away for a few days. I also do not want my target audience to be under the impression that the comte owns a country house; I want to retain the image of his being an impoverished nobleman.

23 'La Gasparin' is slightly more dismissive than 'Mme Gasparin', hence the need to find a similar tone in translation. The idea here is that the comte sounds a little sarcastic as he mentions her name.

24 The phrase sounds a lot neater in English without translating the 'trois ou quatre jours'; it is obvious from the context that the gambling loss is a recent occurrence anyway.

25 I wanted to emphasize the chevalier's sense of indignation; to translate it as 'no, sir and...' was not forceful enough. As I lengthened the first phrase, it was better to have a new sentence to retain the emphasis of the ST.

26 I thought of using 'people are like that nowadays', but it sounded more like a grumpy complaint. 'Le monde' at this time was normally used in reference to high society, rather than the world at large.

27 The sentence structure of the ST adds a poetic dimension to the chevalier's speech; the structure is more complicated than, for example 'Comme je suis amoureux de sa nièce...' To give a slightly more exaggerated touch to the English version, I added the 'from the very moment'. This meant changing the tense from the ST, but I do not feel the meaning was changed as it is obvious that the chevalier is continuing to stay by Mme Gasparin's side.

28 The chevalier seems to realize that his explanation is rather confusing, which is why he needed to add the 'avec elle'. I decided to keep this element of the chevalier's apparent need to clarify what he is saying in the TT.

29 Here I concentrated on playability; the ST sentence is long, and when translated into one sentence in the TT it became even longer, and would have proved difficult for the actor to say without running short of breath. I have changed the ST considerably, in that I have placed a different emphasis on how difficult the chevalier found the whole experience by keeping this to the end. I felt this made a better link with the comte's following speech. Although I have translated with two sentences rather than one, both sentences are still quite long and rambling, and this reflects the chevalier's exaggerated speech. Little additions such as his calling her 'my darling Sophie' are tonal markers; the ST audience would have been more aware of the differences between the

chevalier's and the comte's language, whereas I feel there is a need to emphasize this distinction in the TT. As my intention is to make the language sound slightly dated anyway, the audience (and director/actors) may not always see that the chevalier's language is more flowery.

30 I preferrred to use the term 'a slander' for two reasons; firstly, it sounds more dated than, for example, 'it's all a lie'. Secondly, there are connotations of the story being likely to ruin Mme Gasparin's good name or reputation; as keeping up appearances was so important in this society this is a very apt term to use.

31 The fact that the comte uses the plural 'tes amours' shows that he is not just thinking of the chevalier's relationship with Sophie; he is perhaps assuming that the chevalier has more than one mistress. The phrase 'how's the love life?' is general in this sense, and also reflects the comte's less serious attitude to love. It is also sufficiently idiomatic to stand out from the chevalier's more idealized descriptions of Sophie, which really come to a head in the following speech.

32 This is an example of how using clichés such as love growing stronger every minute of every day can reflect the chevalier's flowery language. Just as the ST audience recognized the language of different genres, my target audience may see allusions to contemporary love songs, for example. My aim in this speech was to make the chevalier sound slightly ridiculous, particularly as the comte's gentle teasing will allow me to use much more down-to-earth phrases.

33 I thought of repeating the 'most' before each adjective in the sentence beginning with 'She's the most sensitive...'. In the end I found this unnecessary as the long list of adjectives would have the actor running short of breath. The repetition of the word 'and' was sufficient, as the chevalier still seems to be getting carried away with his long list of adjectives.

I also wanted to keep the sense of his having used such opposites as 'ferme' and 'tendre'; the chevalier's speech is rambling as he is so enraptured with Sophie.

34 The comte obviously find it amusing that the chevalier compares Sophie to a 'galant homme'; as the chevalier seems to be so concerned with acting like the perfect gentleman, I think it is necessary to retain the same image. The dictionary makes an important distinction between 'un galant homme' and 'un homme galant': 'le galant homme est celui qui a de la probité et de l'honneur; l'homme galant est celui qui se rend aimable auprès des dames' (Littré). This again makes the chevalier's comment seem peculiar, as it is hardly a romantic thing for him to say about the woman he loves. Directly comparing her with a man goes some way to conveying his unusual choice of image.

35 The reference to Phoebus would undoubtedly be lost to my target audience; I did not want to confuse the audience unnnecessarily by keeping the same reference. The most important thing here is that the comte is gently making fun of the chevalier's lack of experience.

36 Another option here was 'are you bedding her'. This does keep a touch of eighteenth-century raunchiness, but perhaps loses the force of the clipped expression of the ST. The word 'wench' firmly dates the text, even though 'have you had her' could be considered a modern expression.

37 It is almost as though the comte is talking to a child here; the difference between his experience with women and the chevalier's is the focus of the humour. There is a sense that, as between children, the comte wants the chevalier to share his secrets, which is why I chose expressions such as 'you're not telling' and 'I can tell'.

38 As the chevalier sounds quite indignant and pompous, I thought the sudden switch to 'Monsieur' rather than 'Sir' sounded more affected.

39 The chevalier is obviously quite shocked by the comte's choice of words and so he would probably find it quite difficult to use such an expression. He picks up on what he sees to be the comte's impertinence, and the way in which he says 'had her' will be quite important. Although there is no indication in the ST that the chevalier should put particular emphasis on this expression, I think this would have been done quite naturally by the actor concerned (and possibly by the TT actor anyway, hence my use of inverted commas rather than italics.)

40 I wanted something snappy here, as the exchanges are very fast and witty in the ST. I could have used something like 'admitted it', but the plosive 't' of 'told' is more forceful – the phrase is short, but will be heard very clearly by the audience.

41 I wanted a phrase which sounded condescending, but not too nasty as the comte is really only teasing him gently. This is quite a colourful, idiomatic expression, whereas something like 'you're so naive' is harsher.

42 Again, I changed the word order to have what seems to be the comte's motto at the end of the speech. The French expression 'cela se fait comme cela se dit' is very neat and concise; I wanted to have a similar sense of conciseness in my TT expression.

43 I wanted to make a clear distinction between the comte's blatant, down-to-earth vocabulary and the chevalier's pomposity.The chevalier's expressions sound more archaic in this scene, whereas the comte's language is in fact fairly modern. As mentioned in my strategic decisions, however, I did not want the use of modern slang to colour the text, which is why I chose to retain the use of 'dear boy'.

44 'Vicieux' in the eighteenth century referred to one's capacity for vice, rather than the modern meaning of nasty.

45 It is likely that the ST audience would have seen a reference to the drame bourgeois in this comment, as well as laughing at the comte's dismissal of the chevalier's moral stance. There is no avoiding the translation loss, as my target audience will not see any allusions to different genres. Instead, I wanted to emphasize the comte's cynical attitude to the chevalier's comments: the chevalier does sound as though he is preaching, and so the image of his giving a sermon fits in quite well.

46 I wanted to find an equivalent expression for the literary style of 'l'intérêt s'oppose à la plus belle union.' I imagine the chevalier at this point to look rather wistful as he mentions Sophie's name.

47 This question has to seem very blunt compared with the chevalier's poetic language of the previous speech. The comte constantly brings the conversation down to a lower level.

48 The hyperbole of the ST must be mirrored in the TT, as it is such a prominent feature of the chevalier's manner of speaking. I do not want to emphasize this point too much, as the chevalier is made to look naive, rather than ridiculous in the ST. The chevalier's language would certainly have sounded quite literary to the ST audience, but perhaps not as overly-sentimental as it seems to a modern audience.

49 The chevalier may have put Sophie on a pedestal, but the comte still refers to her as 'cette petite fille'; all he is interested in knowing is whether the chevalier has managed to sleep with her or not. The 'bedded' and 'wench' act both as archaisms and as tonal markers; the comte reduces Sophie to the level of a sex object, which makes the chevalier's literary language sound even more absurd.

50 If I had transposed the TT to a modern-day setting, I could have translated this comment with a reference to Mills and Boon novels, for example. This would have been some form of equivalent to the reputation of

novels in the eighteenth century. As this does not fit the context, my only option was to ensure the the tonal inference was the same as in the ST. It is obvious that the comte sees the chevalier as being overly sentimental; the 'you're like something out of...' shows his disbelief, and his mocking tone (albeit gentle mockery of the chevalier's love for Sophie.)

51 'Tes petites manières' is very condescending; the comte almost treats the chevalier like a child who has been misbehaving.

52 The TT does make it more obvious that Mme Gasparin's interest lies in money, but I feel this is where the force of the original comment lies. Rather than having a literal translation such as 'interested party' and trying to play on the word 'interest', I have tried to mirror the irony behind the comte's words. Trying to play on the word 'interest' made the sentence quite heavy; the phrase in English did not have the pithy quality of the ST.

53 This stage direction firmly sets the tone of the chevalier's speech; Collé frequently uses the word 'vivement' in this scene but it does not necessarily have to be rendered by the same word in English every time. As noted in my strategic decisions, Collé may not have felt the same need to give precise stage directions; he knew his actors, and could tell how they would play the different characters. This is not the case for the TT.

54 The launch into the chevalier's exposé is very abrupt; although the ST audience would have been accustomed to this type of background detail, I feel my target audience would be somewhat disconcerted by the obvious filling in of detail. The addition of this brief sentence is simply a means of bridging the gap between the chevalier's show of gratitude and his explanation of his relationship with Sophie. I did not feel I could shorten the speech, as the information is important to the understanding of the plot. There is quite a stilted effect to his speech in the ST also, as the comte must surely know this information and so it is an obvious attempt on the author's

part to let the audience know the context. Rather than trying further to make the telling of background information seem less obvious, I think the speech should retain the slight element of artificiality which is in the ST. This is a short play, and is not to be taken seriously to the point that the audience has to believe that everything is realistic. This is another element of how Collé shatters the illusion of theatricality; the monologues are obvious features of theatricality, and the chevalier's exposé could be seen in the same light.

55 Although the comte is simply shown to be laughing in the ST, I think it is better to make it obvious to the audience that the comte has actually been conjuring up a plan. This should come through in the actor's expression anyway, but it seems more natural to have some sort of indication from the comte that he has decided on a plan of action.

56 The 'vous me désespérez' is again very literary; the same term could have been used by a character from Racine, for example. I wanted to reflect the elevated language in the TT.

57 This acts as a reminder to the audience that the comte is related to the chevalier.

58 'Charming' could simply refer to Mme Gasparin's good breeding, whereas 'delectable' has more of a lecherous connotation.

59 The alliteration of 'petit publicain' and the 'ain' sound lends a phonetic quality to this expression which adds to the comte's obvious sense of disdain. Although I have not found an equivalent alliterative effect, the adjectives in the TT belittle the *financier* and are a clear indication of the comte's attitude towards Gasparin.

60 If I kept the French expression 'petite souris' or translated it literally as 'little mouse', this would probably have led to some confusion as the TT audience would have been wondering who the comte was referring to. Collé's audience may have known who the 'petite souris' was; if not, they would at

least have been quite familiar with the expression. As pointed out in my strategic decisions, I am always going to face translation loss because of any possible references to people that the duc's society may have known. I do not really see this as a major lacking in the translation; I was more concerned here with maintaining the tone of the original monologue. The comte shows disdain for Gasparin and a cavalier attitude towards women in this speech.

61 Although this adds more than the 'continuent' of the ST, I feel this is a good opportunity to emphasize the comte's annoyance that Gasparin has plenty of money, whereas he has very little. The expression 'throwing money about' suggests that Gasparin is extremely wealthy, and money is no object. He can afford to throw large sums away without giving it a second thought. It is also a clear indication of how money means power in this society: this expression echoes "throwing his weight about', which is in fact what Gasparin is able to do.

62 The time of day is not particularly important; as it sounded clumsy in English to say 'it may only be three o'clock but...' I decided to omit this. It is important, however, to retain the idea that Gasparin is setting out early in order to arrange a meeting with his mistress. The ST audience would have known immediately what a 'petite maison' and a 'petite alcôve galante' referred to; my audience needs more information at the beginning so that they are in no doubt as to how Gasparin sees it as perfectly natural to talk about his extra-marital affairs. Rich financiers were expected to have a mistress – or several mistresses in the eighteenth century; this would not have been considered unusual in any way.

63 The comte is quite conciliating in this speech; he is choosing his words very carefully. It is important to retain the balance of 'une confidence, et un emprunt...' , as it reflects this careful choice of words, and also his clarity of expresion and syntax makes his request seem even more straightforward.

64 The comte addresses him as 'mon cher Gasparin' several times after this point, particularly at those moments when he brings up the subject of money. As he is obviously being quite ingratiating at these moments, I think it is important to retain the repetition in translating 'mon cher Gasparin', indicating that he is obviously trying to win round the financier. Given the comte's previous comments about 'ce petit publicain', this must have more than a hint of irony, hence the emphasis on the 'dear'.

The comte has now changed his tone completely; he is no longer talking to the young, naive chevalier. He treats Gasparin as his social equal, even though the audience is well aware of his dislike of the financier. He is polite – perhaps excessively so – as he simply wants to get the money he is after. I have therefore tried to change the register at the beginning of the scene (the tone does change as Gasparin hears more details about the comte's arrangement with the woman in question).

65 The expression 'honnête femme' referred to a woman of moral substance.

66 I decided to keep the list of adjectives without adding in 'she's', as this reflects the comte's hesitant way of speaking – he has not had much time to prepare his spiel beforehand, and he obviously does not want to give the game away. It is also a case of making the comte's speech sound natural; people do not tend to talk in full sentences, he is simply adding to the description as the picture of Mme Gasparin comes into his head.

67 This is the first of a number of similar utterances by Gasparin. Gasparin's language differs from the comte's in that Gasparin is never quite so much in control of what he is saying. He uses expressions such as 'quel diable!' and 'la peste!', which are peculiar to him; I wanted to have a particular type of expression which would differentiate Gasparin's use of language from that of the other characters. I think it would be a little too extreme if Gasparin

were to swear all the time – he is not portrayed as uncouth or uneducated, and to have him as the only character swearing would perhaps give that impression. Instead, I decided that he should use expressions with 'God', or 'Lord'; although these expressions have become part of everyday language, they tend to sound more extreme in the play as only one character tends to use such expressions. As my intention is to give the impression of slightly archaic language, these expletives should have a blasphemous edge which a contemporary audience does not always recognize in modern dialogue.
As Mme Gasparin is a much more calculating woman and she loses her temper at several points in the play, there may be a case for her to utter swear words.

68 I wanted to keep the word play of the ST. I first thought of 'Is it possible...' followed by 'It's more than possible...' but this sounded like calque, as it did not seem a natural response in English for the character of Gasparin.

69 'If you would only be so kind' rather than 'if you could' as it reflects how polite the comte is being. See also point 62.

70 A sudden change in tone as the comte is much more abrupt. The 'quoi' of the ST sounds harsh phonetically; this is reflected in the 'b' and 't' sounds of the TT.

71 Gasparin is a well-educated man; the use of expressions such as 'je me fais une conscience' and the conditional tense in this example shows that Gasparin is not the equivalent of the comic servant figure of Collé's parades. However, the next part of the speech is where Gasparin reveals his true thoughts, and where he seems to express himself more naturally.

72 I changed the sentence structure here, as I felt the sudden expression 'for the love of God' needed more warning. By mentioning the two thousand francs sooner, it also made he last phrase shorter and neater, which allowed for the comte's quicker riposte.

73 According to Littré, 'une créature' could be used in the sense of a 'femme galante, femme de mauvaise vie'.

74 The repetition of the word 'slut' was really for clarity here, as the audience may be taken by surprise by Gasparin's outburst, and it is even possible that some do not hear such a short word. It also adds to the humour, as the comte has been so polite to Gasparin during this conversation, and now as he repeats what Gasparin says it makes the distinction between their choice of vocabulary even more acute.

75 The tone with which 'une femme comme celle-là' is said is vital in the ST; the implication is that Gasparin is still very much convinced that he was right to class her as a 'slut'. 'A woman like that' did not seem quite derogatory enough; here, the audience will be fully aware of the character's attitude to the woman in question.

76 According to Littré, the expression 'homme / femme de qualité' signifies that the person thus described is of noble birth.

77 To translate the 'par conséquence' as 'consequently' meant that the retort lost some of its bluntness. I obviously wanted to have the comte finish Gasparin's sentence as this is a clear sign that he is beginning to lose patience.

78 The comte is really play acting by the end of the speech, trying to convince Gasparin that he is a desperate man. To translate the 'déjà' simply with 'already' did not seem plausible in English, in that the comte is obviously starting to say a sentence and then stops. It is not common in English to start a sentence with 'already', at least not in dialogue. The 'I'm beginning to' has the same effect as the 'déjà' in French, in that the comte wants to give the impression that his mind is racing and his thoughts are jumping from one thing to another.

79 The ST audience will see the poignancy of this comment immediately, whereas I feel it is necessary to make Gasparin appear greedier, or more

corrupt in some way in the TT. The final phrase 'but there's plenty more...' is an addition on my part, but I feel it goes some way to explaining the pointed comment being made by Collé. It makes Gasparin appear boastful about his wealth, but blasé about how he manages to get all his money. His lack of subtlety is then higlighted even more by the comte's humility in the following speech.

80 It is obvious that the comte is being sarcastic with his ingratiating reply; this phrase sounds conventional, but the added stage direction will make sure that the director and actor are clear about the tone with which it is to be said. 'A thousand thanks' conjured up the image of an Arab sheikh in a British pantomine, which lost the gentle irony which lies behind the comte's words.

81 Up until this point, the comte had addressed Gasparin as 'vous', now it has changed to 'tu'. This may simply be because the comte knows he has got his own way and does not have to be overly polite. However, I think it is more a sign of how the comte changes his tone; their conversation becomes more laddish, as they discuss the possibility of the comte having the woman for nothing.

82 The description 'the likes of her' picks up on Gasparin's previous comment; it is as though the comte has dropped down to Gasparin's level of thinking and means of expression. It is also a further indication of the comte's sudden switch to 'tu' – he wants to give Gasparin the impression that they are of similar minds. Given Gasparin's ambiguous social status (it is worth noting that he still addresses the comte as 'vous'), this would probably flatter him, although the TT audience will hopefully still see that the comte is playing Gasparin for a fool.

83 I added the stage direction as a means of showing Gasparin's enthusiasm, and his lack of constraint in comparison with the comte. This is

evident from Gasparin's double exclamation of surprise in the ST – I think it is still important to have Gasparin sounding eager and unrestrained, but the visual image reinforces the language differences also. The comte would never cry out in such a way; everything he does and says is much more controlled.

84 I decided to have Gasparin swearing at this point as it is in such contrast to the comte's gentle reminder about the two young lovers. This is one point in the play where I feel I can emphasize the juxtaposition of debauchery and love. Gasparin's image of the chevalier's love for Sophie is crude, in that money is the first concern, followed by Sophie's temperament. Although money is important in this society, the chevalier would not see this as his main interest in marrying Sophie. Gasparin's swearing is in complete contrast to the comte's comment about putting the youngsters out of their misery; the comte's language is almost as flowery as that of the chevalier in scene 2.

The swearing is also a sign of Gasparin's impatience, as he is in a hurry to set up the meeting with his latest mistress.

85 The notion of 'sentiment' is one which is associated with the attitudes of those characters typical of the genre larmoyant: it is possible here that Collé is gently mocking the aforementioned genre.

86 I wanted to keep the image of Mme Gasparin's being two-faced, but I could not find a suitable equivalent in English using the words 'first' and 'last'. Again, this is not a literal translation, but it does keep the opposing aspects of Mme Gasparin's character, using the same imagery of tenderness and deception.

87 'Le bon Gasparin' is not the equivalent of 'good old Gasparin' – one associates this expression in English with someone who has managed to meet up to another's expectations in a positive sense, for example. The force of the

ST expression, however, lies in the comte's sarcasm. Gasparin has met the comte's expectations in that he is as gullible as he imagined him to be.

88 There is no avoidance of translation loss here; the TT audience has nothing with which to compare Collé's portrayal of the tax farmer. The ST audience would have been reminded at this point of financiers in literature such as that of Lesage's Turcaret, and they also would have been more aware of the changing image and social status of the financier in their society. However, the comte's further explanation of what he means by a tax farmer of the old school means that my TT audience is at least going to understand what the comte means by this term, so the comment will not lead to confusion.

89 As the play is set in the eighteenth century, it had to be 'the jingling of coins' rather than the 'rustle of banknotes'. The addition of 'in their fat purses' is a form of compensation; as the bad reputation of tax farmers must have been more readily understood by the ST audience, I am trying to give a further indication to the TT audience of the image of corruption and greed which the ST audience would have associated with the financiers of the 'old school'.

90 'Delicious' has similar connotations to the word 'delectable', as noted in point 56.

91 The comte again changes tack as he meets another character; this is now the language of courtship. This first short sentence sets the tone of their conversation. To keep this speech as one long sentence in the TT made the sentence sound very clumsy, when in fact the comte is extremely articulate

92 I added the extra 'you' at the end as I felt it was at this point that Mme Gasparin would interrupt. The fact that she has asked for the money would be the most embarrassing factor in the whole situation – if anyone else were to find out.

93 As this is the language of galanterie it seems more fitting to have Mme Gasparin address the comte as monsieur throughout. A British audience tends to associate French as being the language of love and seduction; the little reminders that the scene is taking place in France will strengthen the association.

94 Once again, this refects the elevated language of the ST. The hints of archaism are more prominent in this scene, as the comte and Mme Gasparin are being extremely polite to one another on the surface and their words are chosen very carefully.

95 This is another moment where I have chosen to add stage directions in order to reflect the suggestiveness of the ST language. It should be obvious from the ST language that there is a gradual build-up of tension between the two characters; they are obviously attracted to one another and this becomes more obvious as the scene continues. Mme Gasparin feigns embarrassment, and is very careful not to admit her attraction towards the comte in so many words. The fan acts as a useful prop as the TT audience will be able to use it as a guide to Mme Gasparin's character. The fan is a mask, it can cover her face when she is lying. As the comte's words and caresses arouse her, her agitation is reflected by her trying to cool her face by fanning herself. When she lets go of all her inhibitions and is about to surrender herself to the comte the fan will drop to the floor (the final stage direction in this scene). The use of a prop such as a fan is a means of compensating for the fact that my TT audience will not necessarily recognize the heightening tension in the scene fron the language alone; the same can be said for the other stage directions I have added, where the comte moves closer to Mme Gasparin, she backs off etc. This is the type of movement which Collé's actors may have adopted automatically, whereas a few indications to the TT actors will give more specific directions as to how the scene should be played.

96 The fact that he comte has mentioned passion would have been considered extremely forward and yet the language is still elevated and poetic. I have tried to allow for the comte's candour by having him move closer to Mme Gasparin as he speaks. This also fits in with the imagery of warmth – the closer he gets, the more her passions are aroused.

97 Rather than running the risk of the TT sounding like calque, I opted for a free translation, but one which reflects the comte's flattering tone.

98 This seemed like a prepared speech by Mme Gasparin – it is very likely that she prepared what she was going to say to the comte in order to keep up the appearance of being in financial distress. I wanted to give the TT the same quality of a prepared speech: well-balanced sentence structures, grammatical correctness.

99 As mentioned in my strategic decisions, this is one of the scenes where physicality will express anything which the language may not. If I were to leave out this stage direction, the suggestiveness of what the comte actually says may not be obvious if the actor does not indicate in some way that he is being slightly lecherous. The dramatic irony of the comte's words must be exploited to the full; to have his real intentions revealed in his actions while he is still maintaining an air of politeness is exactly the force behind the ST.

100 The 'je raffole de vous' is familiar language; I did not want to upset the balance of the rest of the scene, however, by using an expression which was too coarse. Instead, I incorporated the suggestiveness of the comte's spech into the idea of his being willing to do anything for Mme Gasparin, i.e. he is even prepared to pay for the privilege of sleeping with her.

101 Mme Gasparin knows exactly what the comte is getting at, but still keeps up the pretence of high moral standards. I have made slightly more explicit what the ST audience would have understood automatically from the language adopted by the two characters.

102 This is the tone of language which would be more expected from the chevalier; it needs to be over-the-top as the comte is simply trying to provoke Mme Gasparin into admitting that she is attracted to him. This is a form of parody by Collé; the language of galanterie has become a sham in this scene, and perhaps Collé is suggesting that this is in fact the case. However, this does not change the humour of the scene, which depends on dramatic irony. The audience knows that the comte is exaggerating, and that he is manipulating Mme Gasparin by what he says.

103 I decided on 'decorum' as I interpreted 'délicatesse' in the sense of tact, rather than delicacy of manners (both definitions are given in Robert). The word 'decorum' works well here, as the comte picks up on what Mme Gasparin says in his following speech.

104 The excessive use of 'que' in the ST sentence makes it sound complicated and wordy; it is as though the comte is trying to dazzle Mme Gasparin with his longwinded sentence. In order to reflect the complex structure of the ST sentence, I decided on the accumulation of phrases involving the word 'think'. This is another point of humour in the play, as the comte is by now very sure of his victory and, as Mme Gasparin admits, seems capable of convincing her of anything.

105 During a performance at a small private theatre in the eighteenth century, the exchange of knowing looks between actor and audience would have probably happened automatically, given that the people concerned would have known one another. In a public performance, however, the atmosphere is completely different, and I feel there is a need – up to a certain extent – to indicate moments of dramatic irony. The actor may have looked at the audience at this point anyway, but this stage direction also acts as a guide to the comte's tone of voice as he claims the whole matter is not costing him anything.

106 This is another echo of the title, coming at the very point of the comte's seduction of Mme Gasparin.

107 The word 'reconnaissance' is taken up again by Mme Gasparin in the following scene, and so I wanted a word which could be used in both the examples. Although the term 'recognition' could have been an apt translation, it did not fit quite so neatly as a translation of 'reconnaissance' in Scene 7. I also wanted to keep the sense of opposition between the use of the verb 'exciter' and the more banal 'reconnaissance' in this last sentence. I felt this opposition could be highlighted by Mme Gasparin's hesitation over her choice of words; the audience (and the comte) might have expected her to use a more passionate term at this point. The fact that she does not adds even more to the increasing sense of passion between them.

108 The 'je vous aime à la fureur' is again extremely passionate; this is not a pleasantry, it is a very direct admission of his sexual attraction towards a married woman. I felt the use of two adverbs rather than one at least went some way to indicating his rush of enthusiasm.

109 My version of the corresponding phrases in the ST has the comte sounding more dynamic; the question and imperative form seemed more forceful. This is the key speech in the come's seduction of Mme Gasparin, and I felt it had to stand out as such.

110 Although it is Mme Gasparin who repeats the word 'reconnaissance' in the following speech (in a different context), I was not altogether sure that the audience would notice the play on words. As the word 'gratitude' fitted so well here, I decided to include it so that the coded messages between the two characters would be more obvious.

111 Although this is much longer than the ST sentence, I felt again it was necessary to make the innuendos quite clear. One could assume that Collé's audience would have been expecting the sexual undertones in the play, but

my audience does not know Collé's work and so at some points in the play there is a need to make more explicit what the ST audience would possibly have expected.

112 This is a further example of the hidden meanings behind their words: only the comte, Mme Gasparin and the audience are aware of the true situation.

113 The comte's final comment also has to be loaded, yet subtle enough so that the chevalier and Sophie remain in the dark. The beauty of Collé's text lies in what remains unsaid, rather than what is said.

114 This scene proved to be the most difficult to translate. Although there are very few stage directions in the ST, I felt this scene allowed for a certain amount of interpretation on the part of the actors, and myself as the translator of the text. This assumption is based on my knowledge of Collé as an author, and an idea which I have formed of his work and the type of audience he was aiming at. Sophie shows herself to be an emancipated woman in this scene, in terms of how she admits she is willing to give herself to her lover. As the target audience will not realize how candid Sophie's admission is for a girl of her upbringing in this century, I have opted to compensate for this in the form of stage directions. My intention is not to turn this scene into farce, letting the physicality overshadow what is being said. This is something which I regretted about the performance of Le Galant escroc which I saw in Paris: the director had chosen to have the actors starting to undress one another on stage, adding to Gasparin's sense of shock when he arrives on the scene. I feel this is taking things too far; the language of the scene does not lack subtlety, and the chevalier in particular is rather naive about matters of love.

115 This opening phrase reveals Sophie's longing to be alone with the chevalier, as well as her eagerness to find out what the comte intends to do.

This sets the tone for the whole scene, whereas something like 'you didn't have time to tell me' simply suggests that a previous conversation was interrupted, or the chevalier was busy elsewhere.

116 By placing the 'dearest Sophie' at the beginning of the sentence, it draws attention to the way in which the chevalier idolizes Sophie; terms of endearment occur frequently in his speeches. The inclusion of 'oh Sophie' one line later is a similar indication of the chevalier's emotional language.

117 I wanted to find an equivalent register to 'assurer votre sort'; the expression 'seal your fate' made it sound as though Sophie were about to be punished. The expression 'no one can tear my heart apart' is a cliché of sorts, but it does not make the chevalier appear ridiculously exaggerated which, as mentioned in my strategic decisions, is not my intention.

118 Although the beginning of this speech and the two previous speeches does not retain the actual word 'interest' as a direct translation of 'intérêt', the exchanges reflect the differing tones of the two characters; Sophie is fairly adamant, whereas the chevalier is more concerned with expressing his undying love. This is the main force of the ST, and it is preferable to have speeches which retain the neatness and conciseness of the original, rather than trying, unsuccessfully, to find a suitable expression about the characters' having one another's best interests at heart.

119 I decided to reduce this part of the speech to one sentence, as otherwise the speech was rambling, which is not typical of the character of Sophie.

120 I wanted to make it qite clear that the chevalier was beginning to doubt that Sophie wanted to marry him after all. The two unfinished sentences here made his train of thought clearer than a single sentence would have done.

121 See Point 115.

122 This is a similar point to 116; this clichéd expression sounds more natural than direct calque of the ST.

123 This is the point where I am suggesting that Sophie begins to hint that she and the chevalier should sleep with one another. The TT has a suggestive meaning, without Sophie appearing blatant. The accompanying stage direction is an indication to the actress of how the words should be said, and the chevalier's reaction is a further means of showing the difference in confidence between the two characters.

124 The ST has the echo of 'époux' and 'épouserai', as Sophie is simply confirming what the chevalier has just said to her. This is the reason for repeating the word 'husband' in the TT.

125 As this is such a mutual exchange of compliments, I liked the idea of the two characters picking up on one another's words and sometimes using the same images. The chevalier also tends to take the image one step further, as he does in the following speech. I felt the text read better without the inclusion of the phrase 'could Sophie bear to live without you', as it allowed for the continuation of the idea of their being able to read one another's minds.

126 This is an example of the chevalier's slightly more exaggerated version of Sophie's declaration.

127 The chevalier always talks about the soul, whereas Sophie does not always use such abstract notions. The reason I chose to have this particular image is because of the way in which it can be distorted in the following speeches to reveal Sophie's obvious intentions to seduce the chevalier.

128 This speech is designed to show the great difference in attitude between the chevalier and Sophie. The chevalier is preaching again, just as he did in Scene 2. However, it is important that he does not sound angry with Sophie; he is more concerned about preserving her reputation.

129 Sophie suddenly addresses him as tu at this point; the stage direction shows the sudden change in tempo as Sophie reveals her passion.

130 Similar imagery is used in Scene 6 when the comte and Mme Gasparin first meet. This makes a link between the two seduction scenes, although the chevalier's reaction highlights the difference in maturity and experience between the two couples.

131 I did not want the sudience to miss the most important part of Sophie's speech through being distracted by the physical movement. To have Sophie look up at this point suggests that she is saying something quite important.

132 Although this is a slight deviation from the ST, I did not want to lose the natural flow of speech by sticking too rigidly to the ST if this meant that the words sounded stilted.

133 As the chevalier is obviously quite excited, I did not want to have his speech sounding too wordy, as he is obviously not in control of his feelings. My main intention in this speech is to reflect the sexual connotations which are present in words such as 'plaisir' and 'volupté'.

134 My main concern here was to have Gasparin shattering the romantic moment; the fact that he pulls the chevalier to his feet not only makes Gasparin seem oafish, it also points to the fact that the two young lovers should not be seen as totally innocent.

135 The irony of Gasparin's comment about his wife got lost when I kept to the word order of the French, whereas here the audience has time to laugh at and absorb the humour.

136 The phrase 'my wife's otherwise occupied' makes it sound as though she is up to no good, even though this is not what Gasparin is thinking. This is the connotation of the ST also, the point being that the audience notes the irony behind Gasparin's words.

Also 'it was me' rather than 'it was I', as I think this is a gentle reminder of the small differences in language register between Gasparin and, for example, the comte and chevalier.

137 The chevalier has a totally different means of expression to Gasparin; he tends towards exaggeration and hyperbole, whereas Gasparin is much more blunt. It is difficult to judge just how literary the chevalier's language would have sounded to the ST audience, although the comte's comment about the chevalier sounding like something from a novel suggests that his language would have appeared flowery and romanticized to the ST audience. The audience is brought back to reality in this scene; it is important to maintain the distinction between Gasparin's down-to-earth approach, and the chevalier's more idealized view of his situation. This distinction is made possible through their different use of language.

138 This seemed a perfect opportunity to show the distinction between their choice of vocabulary and expressions, as mentioned in the previous point.

139 Again I opted for expressions which could have double interpretations; the chevalier and Sophie have to sound perfectly innocent, and yet the audience sees their comments in a different way. This will also be the case in the next scene, where the comte's comments have to be subtle enough not to give the game away to Gasparin, and yet cleverly worded so that Mme Gasparin feels uncomfortable.

140 Although I could have translated this as 'just got back', the notion of even slight innuendo was too good an opportunity to miss. Depending on how this is said by the actor, this comment will make the audience smile or even laugh. As it is quite difficult to replicate the wit and innuendo of the ST, this could perhaps be seen as compensation. It fits in with the context as Mme Gasparin is anxious in case her husband suspects anything.

141 As 'affaire' could apply to both affairs of the heart and business deals I wanted to have an expression which also reflected this duality. I first thought of 'business affair', but 'transaction' seemed better as it suggests the exchange

of goods – as the woman concerned was selling her body the term was certainly suitable.

142 The comte is a well-educated man and his language would always be grammatically correct. Although nowadays it is more common for people to say 'like me', the 'such as I' also reflects the dated language.

143 My policy in translating the comte's loaded comments was to try to keep to the original as much as possible but if a fairly literal translation proved stilted and decidedly unfunny, I felt it was best to deviate slightly from the ST expressions where necessary. The scene works because of these loaded comments, and if they do not appear as natural elements in the conversation then the translation has failed. Timing and playability were my first concern in translating this scene as so much depended on the comte's cleverly worded comments.

144 I could have used 'happy' or 'content', but the comte's answer would not have been so piquant.

145 The physical action is a reflection of the 'tutoiement' once again. Visually this stage direction adds to the humour also, as Gasparin will look extremely pleased as he is being let into the comte's secret and Mme Gasparin will be panicking as she will be wondering just how much the comte is going to say.

146 My version is longer, but Gasparin insults his wife so much in this scene, and the two men talk in such a laddish manner that I felt the choice of expression had to reflect this fully. The notion of equivalence is called into question; what would have been deemed improper in the eighteenth century may seem quite mild to a contemporary audience. Although I did not want to overdo the insulting tone, idiomatic expressions such as 'she's no oil painting' rather than a more banal 'she's not pretty' add a touch of realism in that the language is the expression of that particular personality.

147 The body language in this scene, as in all of the scenes, in fact, is of the utmost importance. This particular stage direction ensures that the pressure is placed on Mme Gasparin right from the beginning, while Gasparin is blissfully unaware of what has taken place.

148 Long lists such as this are not so common in English dialogue; it works much better in French. Consequently, I decided to add a bit more to the TT

149 For Mme Gsparin to react so violently to the comte's description I felt he had to be more pertinent; what would have seemed quite personal in the eighteenth century seems somewhat bland when translated literally into English. As the comte is staring at Mme Gasparin at this point, I thought of having his description of her features follow his gaze and the fact that she stops him at this point seems perfectly natural.

150 Gasparin is so abrupt that I felt the TT needed more to show his total disregard for her feelings. To call her 'woman' is dismissive and condescending.

151 By returning to the comte's final remark I got to focus on the neck, rather than her hands. This particular comment worked well, as it has connotations of 'you've got a neck on you' which certainly applies to Mme Gasparin.

152 There is translation loss here, as this does not have the resonance of the 'tendre' which appears in Scene 1. The comte is obviously talking about how he rates the woman as a lover, and so 'considerate' is perhaps more appropriate than 'affectionate'. There is also a more lecherous note to 'when the moment arises' than 'when she has to be'.

153 Mme Gasparin has to appear both defiant and frightened, as she is worried that her husband might realize that she is actually the woman in question.

154 As Gasparin is revealing the intimate details of his wife's performance in bed and the comte appears to be doing the same, it is almost as though they have formed a club together and Mme Gasparin cannot join. The fact that Gasparin picks up on the comte's choice of words makes the reference to sex obvious, and also emphasizes this type of bond between the two men. I have also embellished the ST with tonal markers which I feel would be characteristic of Gasparin, such as the 'mind'. Such markers are not missing in the ST; the 'oh'! for example at the beginning of the sentence is a tonal marker, but to translate it as 'oh!' at the beginning of the TT sentence looks like calque.

155 Again the TT sentence is a lot longer in translation, but the most important consideraton is the irony of what Gasparin is saying. The actor would have to pause at this point as it should provoke laughter amongst the audience.

156 I felt it necessary to change the word order in English, as the emphasis would fall more naturally here on the 'you' and the 'in love'.

157 This image is similar to the comte's questioning of Mme Gasparin in Scene 6, when he mentions the 'flames of passion'. As this speech does have the same tone and similar vocabulary to the comte's build-up to seducing Mme Gasparin in the first place, similar imagery at least reminds the audience (as well as Mme Gasparin) that the comte is capable of turning on the charm whenever he has to. Mme Gasparin also realizes by now that she has been duped, and the reminders of their previous discussion will make her even more nervous.

158 This is one point where I could not find a suitable expression in English with the word 'noble', which although used in a different context here may still have resonances of their social positions.

159 This term of endearment is like rubbing salt into Mme Gasparin's wounds, and it is also an echo of how the comte kept addressing Gasparin as

'my dear Gasparin' when he tried to get the money from him in the first place. The word 'lady' is also ironic, as this is the term the comte and Gasparin argued about at the beginning of Scene 4.

160 The term 'scoundrel' is an apt description of the comte, and has the connotations which I mentioned in point 1 when discussing the title of he play.

161 The comte even goes so far as to tell Gasparin where the money is exactly; I added the detail of the cabinet being beside her bed as it suggests to the audience that Mme Gasparin did put the money away there before sleeping with the comte – he will be reminding her of this also, which is close to a veiled threat if she refuses to give her husband back the money.

162 To have a translation such as 'cruelly deceived' makes her sound like the chevalier, whereas Mme Gasparin knows that her plan simply has not worked. Granted, he has taken adavantage of her, but she is not the wronged woman by any means, as the comte reminds her in Scene 13.

163 Again the tone shows that Mme Gasparin is not pathetic; she knows when she has been beaten and is bitter rather than hurt.

164 The audience will see the comte's touch of sarcasm in the 'ta chère femme'; although the TT version of 'your charming wife' will also make the audience smile, the extra comment about this being the opportune moment is a bonus. After the innuendos and the heightened drama of the previous scene, I did not want the play to lose its momentum at this point by having the comte sound a touch off-hand.

165 A literal translation of 'remplie de justice' and 'esprit de justice' made the translation sound stilted, and as the comte uses both expressions a short time after one another I felt the speeches would have been marked by their awkwardness. As the comte is still addressing Gasparin as 'tu' I felt I could use a more idiomatic phrase which is a bit closer to the tone of the previous

scene. The comte seems to call Gasparin 'tu' when there is any hint of impropriety in what they are saying to one another.

166 This idiomatic phrase renders the exact tone of the original; the comte is careful of what he is saying as he is wondering whether Gasparin is foolish enough to believe what he is saying.

167 Rather than something similar to 'that's some story' I thought this would maintain the dramatic irony: the audience knows that this is exactly what the comte is doing

168 I wanted to maintain the echo of the word 'reconnaissance', particularly as this was the euphemism first adopted by Mme Gasparin. The tables have now been turned, and it is fitting that her own words should be used against her.

169 There is a combination in the ST of a conventional polite means of extending a compliment to a woman and the baseness of the vocabulary used, which is why I wanted to keep the sense of the 'que vous avez eue'. This could have been a conventional compliment right up to the last comment Gasparin makes, so the emphasis in my TT falls at the end.

170 Again a conventional answer; it makes both men sound very blasé about the whole business which is the tone of the ST.

171 By not specifically mentioning the fact that she deserves to get the money from her husband in the second half of her husband, this leaves the phrase more ambiguous. She deserves the money as she hands it back with such good grace and she has earned it in the sense that the comte has got what he wanted.

172 The comte's arguments are ridiculous in that the chevalier's good fortune depends on war breaking out. Mme Gasparin knows that this is ridiculous, and is well aware of the veiled threat behind the comment about how the chevalier is related to the comte. This is blackmail, but Gasparin is

naive enough to believe that the comte's arguments about war breaking out are perfectly legitimate.

173 The responses made by Gasparin and Mme Gasparin are important, in that they reveal their opinions of the comte. Gasparin is completely duped, but her reply is extremely abrupt. It is the tone which I felt was more important, rather than trying to find a phrase with 'reasons' which did not quite have the force of Mme Gasparin's curt response.

174 Gasparin's lack of eloquence in the ST is important, as the last impression he gives before leaving the more intelligent comte and Mme Gasparin is that of a bumbling idiot. The hesitations show his naive eagerness and his inability to articulate his thoughts.

175 The register has changed once again, as the comte seems on the surface to show more respect. This is the politeness of convention which will irritate Mme Gasparin even more as the comte's polite question is nothing short of blackmail.

176 The structure of the ST sentence is complex, the effect being that Mme Gasparin sounds pompous and indignant. However, when I tried to retain the complexity of sentence structure I felt there was a danger that the TT audience would get a bit lost, which detracts from the indignant tone. The use of the verb 'to despise' rather than, for example 'to hate' or 'I can't stand you' does have a more indignant tone.

177 The word 'hate' is more clipped here; she has let her guard drop as she is getting more and more angry with the comte's patronizing tone.

178 I chose the sentence breaks where I thought they were most natural, rather than rigidly following the sentence structure of the ST.

179 As I could not find a satisfactory concise way of mirroring the sequence of verbs in English, I decided to opt for clarity instead. The comte is

self-assured and very precise; to have an awkward jumble of verbs in English loses the tone of the ST.

180 This is quite strong for Mme Gasparin, but it shows her two sides; she can be indignant and act like a lady wronged in front of the comte, but she is just as calculating as he is. The contrast between her previous pomposity and her sudden swearing is quite striking.

181 The addition of 'little' makes it sound even more secretive and just a touch condescending

182 This is compensation for the repetition of 'penser' in the ST; this is not a literal translation but the same effect is achieved in that Mme Gasparin picks up on what the comte is saying and interrupts him before he can carry his veiled threats even further. This sentence is shorter in the TT, but it reflects her anger and so is not too much of a translation loss. As the text has been lengthened on the whole, such omissions help to redress the balance, if they do not change the overall effect.

183 This is an extremely long sentence in the ST and I felt it needed to be broken up simply for the actress to be able to catch her breath. The colon before the final phrase makes Mme Gasparin's pause and this reflects how emphatic her conclusion is.

184 The comte is very self-assured and flatters himself at this point – his confidence is not really arrogant, however, which is why I chose such an idiomatic, lighthearted way of singing his own praises. It is important that the audience remains on his side rather than seeing him as the villain in this case.

185 I did not think it appropriate to have her swearing at this point, as the original stage direction of 'se radoucissant' suggests that she has admitted defeat. The term 'beastly man' is slightly dated which is appropriate for the suggestion of archaism, and it is also fairly mild compared with her former outbursts.

186 This is the one point in the scene where the comte is not putting on an act and his language should consequently sound matter-of-fact.

187 The register is typical of a recognition scene such as in Diderot's *Le Fils naturel*. As mentioned before, Collé questioned the vraisemblance of such scenes, so it is likely that we are to assume that this is gentle mockery of contrived endings. I decided to repeat the 'Oh, Madame' as it sounds a little ridiculous, especially considering what has just taken place in the scene before.

188 The comte is masterful here; he is the only character not to say 'Oh, Madame'.

189 Again I wanted to have the contrast between the poetic, flowery language and Mme Gasparin's true personality, which is why I chose to have her swearing here also. This is an example of maintaining the combination of vulgarity and idealism which I discussed in my strategic decisions.

190 Once again the comte adapts his language to suit the situation; this is something which could just as easily have been said by the chevalier. It is important to reflect the flowery language of the ST as it makes the comte seem even more calculating – Mme Gasparin can do nothing but smile sweetly.

191 The repetition of the 'Oh Madame, how can...' in theses two sentences mirrors the 'Ah, madame/ma tante que de..' of the ST. Again it emphasizes the more idealistic manner of speaking of the chevalier and Sophie and classes them together as such.The language of the scene is not in keeping with the reality of the situation; although the audience, the comte and Mme Gasparin are all aware of this, the other characters are not.

192 I did not want to have Gasparin sounding blunt, because of the stage direction suggesting that he is good-hearted. However, he does stop them before they get too carried away – this is perhaps Collé's way of telling his

audience that he has had enough of all the hyperbole. The tone I wanted to convey in this comment was, therefore, one that indicated a gentle put-down.

193 This is closer to the laddish comments exchanged by the comte and Gasparin in Scene 10. Again the comments must be open to interpretation by the audience.

194 As mentioned in the previous point, my choice of expression has to be such that it leaves Gasparin's comments open to interpretation, just as in the ST. He could be talking either about his wife's agreeing to the marriage or agreeing to sleep with the comte.

195 This is not the literal translation, but it is something which will strike Mme Gasparin as being painfully true, which is the intended effect of the ST.

196 The double meaning here lies in the fact that she is confessing that she might have slept with the comte anyway, but is more angry because she has been duped over the money.

197 I did not want to make Sophie sound overly sentimental at this point as she is the more level-headed of the couple. There is hyperbole but her expression of gratitude is very calm and controlled, unlike the chevalier's natural exuberance.

198 A small reminder of the title as the play comes to an end.

199 I chose not to have him finish the sentence so that the audience would be aware of the ongoing reference to 'sentiment'. The ST audience would be more aware of the expression, whereas my audience is not necessarily going to notice the various references.

200 As mentioned in my translation strategy, I do not feel it is appropriate to retain the song, but an eighteenth-century British audience would be accustomed to an epilogue spoken by the characters at the end of a play. In order to retain the sense of fun of the vaudeville, I have opted for rhyme. A word-for-word translation proved to be nigh on impossible, but my aim is to

preserve what I see to be the attitudes of the various characters, and have them saying things which are in keeping with their personality.

201 This cliché summarizes the chevalier's attitude to love; although this is not the exact translation of the ST, I feel it is a clear marker of the chevalier's personality.

202 The audience may get confused by a reference to 'Iris', thinking that this is another woman known to the chevalier. Instead, I have opted for another clichéd expression; it may not have the same reference to antiquity, but it avoids any ambiguity and is in keeping with the chevalier's romanticized view of love.

203 I decided to keep the refrain, and repetition of the final line as I feel this is a quality of the vaudeville which makes it jaunty, and also acts as a link between what all of the characters are saying. Although they have different attitudes, they are all concerned with the one theme, i.e. the meaning of love.

204 The final line in Gasparin's verse in the ST is different from all the others. I think this is important for several reasons; it isolates Gasparin from the others in terms of his level of intelligence, i.e. he is not quite able to remember and repeat what the others say. It also makes Gasparin appear self-important, as he wants to tell everyone precisely what *he* thinks about love, as opposed to a general opinion.

205 As Mme Gasparin is talking directly to the comte in this verse, I felt I could get away with a reference to the comte's blackmailing tricks.

206 As mentioned above, my intention in writing the epilogue was to retain the identity of the characters. The final verse is designed to make the audience laugh, or smile. It leaves them with the impression that the play is not designed to make any deep social comments, but is, rather, a piece of entertainment. The comte is a rogue and a charmer; the vocabulary here sums up his whole attitude to love affairs.

Conclusion

It is difficult – or perhaps impossible – to assess whether the translation of *Le Galant escroc* will stand up to the test in performance. Translation of any form of drama presents the translator with endless variations on a text, and the final version is then interpreted by the director, the actor and each individual in the audience: in the words of J. L. Styan, 'the text is a tune to be sung' (Styan, 1963, p. 86). This comment, although applied to the actor's role in this case, equally applies to the translator's task; a text intended for performance purposes cannot just be written on the page; to adapt Styan's metaphor, the translator has to compose a tune that the actor can perform, and to include in the 'score' indications to show how the song should be performed. My aim in translating *Le Galant escroc* is to produce a tune similar to the original, and one which captures the variations in tone and tempo. These variations include, for example, features of the play such as the comparison between the chevalier's flowery language and Gasparin's vulgarities. The question remains, however, whether it is feasible to produce a new version of what could be seen as an old, forgotten song.

The arguments concerning the feasibility of translating Collé for a modern audience will naturally stem from the financial constraints involved in any theatre director or company agreeing to stage this play. Theatre companies, however small, have to be concerned with covering their costs; in order to attract audiences, directors are more often than not obliged to stage those plays which will guarantee audience numbers. The fact alone that this play is a translation may mean lack of interest on their part; the added facts that the play dates from the eighteenth century, and that the original author is unknown would but add to their reluctance to run the risk of the play not getting enough of an audience. However, I believe there is a potential market

for plays such as *Le Galant escroc* in translation, and it is these arguments which shall form the basis of this conclusion.

The fact that *Le Galant escroc* was written over two centuries ago brings up the question of relevance to the target audience. The matter is complicated by the fact that the text is not designed to be read, with useful notes explaining cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target cultures: this play is designed to be performed and, as comedy, is supposed to amuse the audience. I shall look first of all at possible linguistic problems, and secondly at cultural references.

Archaism of language did not prove to be a particular problem in understanding the source text; there are certain nuances of eighteenth-century French, as commented upon in Chapter 4, but on the whole the language of the play was not difficult to follow, and in fact resembled modern-day vocabulary and syntax very closely. Although my intention is convey a hint of archaism in the target text, the resulting translation is not heavily stylized to the point that the English-speaking audience has to concentrate on comprehension of the actual words. My intention is not to give the impression that the play has been written by an eighteenth-century English-speaking author; and even if it were, the language would not necessarily pose a problem for the British audience. The continued success of Shakespeare and plays such as Sheridan's *School for Scandal* are proof enough that archaism in language will not hinder audience enjoyment of the production.

The specificity of the period in which the ST is set was a major concern in deciding upon a translation strategy. As costume drama remains a popular form of entertainment – one only has to consider the recent success of television productions such as *Moll Flanders* and *Pride and Prejudice* – there seems little to suggest that a translated version of *Le Galant escroc* in period costume would not work on stage. The main problem lies in those comments

in the text which are directly related to the specific mechanisms of that particular society.

If Collé had chosen to place more emphasis on social comment in the play – particularly as concerns the relationship between the nobility and the *financiers* – this would have posed more of a problem in translation. It is an impossible task to generate the same sort of feelings amongst the target audience as would have been experienced by the source audience. The complexity of the class system in eighteenth-century French society cannot be conveyed through the odd comment made by one, or several, of the characters. However, it does not appear to have been Collé's intention to let social comment overshadow his real intention in writing *Le Galant escroc*: entertainment. It cannot be denied that there is a definite need in translating the play to inform the audience as to the *fermier's* role in this society, and his perceived social status. However, a few details are enough to clarify the relationship between Gasparin on one side, and the comte and chevalier on the other. The audience does not necessarily need to know full details of how the *fermiers* exploited the taxation system of eighteenth-century France; what is important is the suggestion that Gasparin is exploiting the system, and that the comte, although willing to accept Gasparin socially, bears a certain grudge against him.

The fact that Collé is a relatively unknown author to a contemporary audience – whether they be British or French – could be seen as a positive reason for translating his work. As discussed in the introduction, authors writing predominantly for the private theatres in eighteenth-century France have not received as much attention – or acclaim – as the mainstream authors, whose work figured in the repertories of the Comédie-française and Comédie-italienne. In bringing together the cultural, historical and linguistic factors necessary to an understanding of *Le Galant escroc*, I have introduced a

British audience to an aspect of eighteenth-century French theatre which is, on the whole, unknown to them.

Although it was my intention to enlighten an audience as to the merits of Collé's theatre, I did not want the end result to be a translation which sounds like a translation, and nothing more. If the TT loses all the theatricality of the ST, then the basic aim of Collé's play has been lost. Collé wrote this play for the entertainment of a particular group of people; as he was well acquainted with the duc d'Orléans' social circle, he was in a privileged position as concerns assessing the possible audience reaction. Although there are satirical elements in the play – mainly concerning the *financiers* – Collé's intention seems to have been to amuse, rather than to offend, or to make any deep social comments.

In order to avoid obstruction to theatricality, I have departed from literal translation, as word-for-word translation tends to result in calque. An example of departure from literal translation is the translation of the *vaudeville*. Rather than pay strict attention to literal meaning, my aim here was to produce a version of the ST *vaudeville* which retained the element of fun at the end of the play. However, I have taken into account the various social, linguistic and historical factors which are necessary for an understanding of how each of the characters is portrayed. Additions such as stage directions are a further means of retaining the sense of theatricality, and also of ensuring that the audience has not missed implicit meanings present in the ST. For example, physical gestures can compensate for linguistic factors in French which cannot be conveyed directly in English, such as the switch between *tu* and *vous*.

To sum up, I have endeavoured to retain the author's presumed intentions, without losing sight of my aim to produce a performable script. In following my translation strategy, I have tried to make decisions which are consistent with the findings of my research into eighteenth-century literature,

society and language, and decisions based on my personal interpretation of Collé's work.

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LE GALANT ESCROC.

Comédie

PERSONNAGES

M. GASPARIN, financier.

MME GASPARIN, tante de Sophie.

SOPHIE, nièce de Mme Gasparin, amoureuse du chevalier.

LE CHEVALIER, amoureux de Sophie.

LE COMTE DE GULPHAR, parent du chevalier.

La scène est dans un salon commun aux appartements de M. et Mme Gasparin.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE

LE COMTE, *seul, tenant une lettre, qu'il lit, tout bas, et paraissant parler à cette lettre.*

Eh! mais, ma chère madame Gasparin, vous écrivez très bien!... Vous me donnez là un rendez-vous en bonne forme; cela est très bon... Il y a longtemps que j'ai envie de vous avoir, et votre lettre est satisfaisante à cet égard... Votre style est fort tendre... oh! très tendre! mais vous le faites payer cher. Comment diable! il faut que je vous trouve deux cents louis, que vous dites que vous avez perdus au jeu! Je vous aime... bien... d'accord...; mais je ne suis pas si tendre, moi. Deux cents louis! À qui les emprunter?... Parbleu, ma chère dame, vous me traitez comme un financier, et je ne suis qu'un homme de qualité. Deux cents louis!... Voilà donc où tendaient toutes les agaceries (indécentes, j'ose dire) que vous me faites depuis un mois?... Vous aviez votre but. Je croyais tout platement, moi, que vous en vouliez à mon cœur ou à ma personne... et point du tout, c'est à ma bourse que vous en voulez... Oh! cela me fait naître de violents soupçons... (*En s'adressant à la lettre.*) Ah çà, madame Gasparin, répondez-moi. Avez-vous véritablement perdu cet argent-là au

jeu?... Je n'en crois rien, moi; d'autant plus que vous me demandez le secret sur cette perte avec tant d'affectation que je parierais ma tête qu'elle n'est pas réelle. Ah! voici le chevalier qui pourra m'en éclaircir.

SCÈNE II

LE CHEVALIER, LE COMTE

LE COMTE: Ah! bonjour, mon petit chevalier.

LE CHEVALIER: Salut au comte de Gulphar!

LE COMTE: Quand on veut te voir, mon petit parent, il faut venir te chercher chez M. Gasparin. Mais, dis-moi, il y a cinq jours que je suis à la campagne; as-tu entendu parler d'une perte de deux cents louis que la Gasparin a faite au jeu, depuis trois ou quatre jours?

LE CHEVALIER, *vivement*: Non, monsieur, et rien n'est si faux que cette prétendue perte au jeu. C'est un ridicule qu'on veut lui donner. Voilà comme on est dans le monde; on ne finit point de faire des histoires sur les jolies femmes de finance!

LE COMTE: Es-tu bien sûr que ce soit si fort un conte bleu?

LE CHEVALIER, *vivement*: Oh! sûr, et très sûr! Vous savez qu'amoureux, comme je le suis, de sa nièce, je ne quitte plus Mme Gasparin; mais notamment depuis dix jours je n'ai pas manqué de souper tous les soirs dans ses sociétés, avec elle... Et je vous dirai même une circonstance, indifférente aux autres, mais assommante pour quelqu'un qui aime, c'est que, depuis six jours, j'ai eu constamment le malheur de faire la partie de Mme Gasparin, au lieu de faire celle de sa nièce.

LE COMTE, *avec finesse et en souriant*: Rien n'est mieux prouvé; c'est une fausseté.

LE CHEVALIER: Oh oui, c'est une fausseté.

LE COMTE: Oui, oui, je vois cela; mais, parlons d'autre chose. Eh bien, mon cher enfant, comment vont tes amours?

LE CHEVALIER, *avec chaleur*: Oh! monsieur, je suis plus amoureux que jamais de la charmante Sophie. Vous connaissez sa beauté; eh bien, les qualités de son cœur sont encore au-dessus. De la philosophie dans la tête. C'est l'âme la plus sensible, la plus belle, la plus ferme et la plus tendre... Oh oui, monsieur, c'est bien véritablement de Sophie qu'on peut dire qu'elle réunit les vertus d'un galant homme aux grâces et aux attraits de son sexe.

LE COMTE, *riant*: Ah! ah! ah! on voit bien, mon petit chevalier, que tu ne fais que d'entrer dans le monde! Quel phébus! Tiens, mon ami, réduisons cela au simple; dis-moi, naturellement, l'as-tu? dis-moi, l'as-tu?

LE CHEVALIER: La question est singulière! Non, monsieur. Assurément Sophie est bien éloignée...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Tu ne veux rien dire? tu as des mœurs encore? Cela se passera. Mais tu l'as; je vois cela, tu l'as.

LE CHEVALIER, *avec vivacité*: Ah! monsieur, que tout à l'heure je sois...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: La, la, la, la! arrête donc. Qui diable te demande des parjures?

LE CHEVALIER, *d'un air sérieux et noble*: Eh bien, monsieur, je vous dirai, sans faire de serments, mais très sérieusement, que je ne l'ai pas; mais que si je l'avais je me croirais un coquin...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: De le dire?

LE CHEVALIER: Oui, de le dire.

LE COMTE: Bon! bon! que tu es neuf, mon pauvre garçon! Actuellement cela se dit comme cela se fait. On ne met pas plus de mystère à l'un qu'à l'autre.

LE CHEVALIER: Oh! pour moi, je suis assez heureux pour ne pas connaître encore cette dépravation-là.

LE COMTE: *Dépravation!* Quel terme! Mais va donc dans le monde. Tu n'as nul usage.

LE CHEVALIER: Oh! s'il faut être vicieux pour...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Oh! trêve de morale, mon cher ami, l'on a tant vu de cela!

LE CHEVALIER: Eh bien, oui, monsieur, laissons cela. Revenons à mon mariage avec Sophie. M. Gasparin ne demande pas mieux, mais sa femme n'est point de cet avis; et, parce que je ne suis point riche, l'intérêt s'oppose à la plus belle union.

LE COMTE: Tu persistes donc toujours à vouloir te marier?

LE CHEVALIER, *très vivement*: Ah! monsieur, tout mon bonheur...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: À la fin, tu me ferais croire que tu n'es pas encore arrangé avec cette petite fille. Quoi! réellement tu n'es pas arrangé? tu ne l'es pas? Je m'y perds.

LE CHEVALIER, *fièrement, et d'un air presque menaçant*: Tenez, monsieur le Comte, faites sur moi tant de plaisanteries que vous voudrez, mais respectez, je vous le demande en grâce...

LE COMTE: Oh! tu es amoureux comme un roman. Allons, cela mérite punition; il faut que je te marie pour faire finir tes petites manières.

LE CHEVALIER: Eh! parlons sérieusement, de grâce.

LE COMTE: Eh bien, oui, très sérieusement. Je veux faire réussir ce mariage. Il n'y a que le caractère intéressé (*en riant*), et très intéressé, de Mme Gasparin qui nous traverse; mais il faudra que nous en venions à bout.

LE CHEVALIER, *vivement*: Ah! monsieur, je vous devrai la vie. Vous savez que Sophie et moi nous avons été élevés ensemble, et qu'elle m'était destinée, avant que ses parents eussent perdu tous leurs biens; qu'un de ses oncles a laissé par testament à Sophie deux cent mille écus, à condition qu'elle se marierait du consentement de Mme Gasparin, qui ne me trouve pas, moi, un parti assez riche pour sa nièce.

LE COMTE, *qui a rêvé pendant tout le couplet précédent, sort de sa rêverie par un éclat de rire*: Ah! ah! ah! ah! ah!

LE CHEVALIER: De quoi riez-vous donc? Vous me désespérez.

LE COMTE: Point du tout, point du tout; je ris de l'idée qui m'est venue pour toi, comme pour moi... Chevalier, ton mariage est fait.

LE CHEVALIER: Comment? Expliquez-vous?

LE COMTE: Il est fait, te dis-je; il ne saurait manquer. Mais je ne puis te dire comment je m'y prendrai... J'entends Gasparin; laisse-moi entamer l'affaire avec lui; et retrouve-toi ici sur le soir.

Le chevalier sort.

SCÈNE III

LE COMTE, *seul.*

Ma foi, je crois mon idée heureuse. Elle établira mon petit chevalier, en jouant un tour excellent à la charmante Gasparin, que j'aurai moyennant cela. Et par là, d'ailleurs, je me vengerai de ce petit publicain, qui, à force d'argent, vient de m'enlever la *petite souris* de l'Opéra. En vérité, si ces gens de finance continuent, l'on ne pourra bientôt plus avoir de filles; et c'est aussi là la cause qui l'empêche de donner de l'argent à sa femme, et ce qui fait que sa femme m'en demande... Mais le voici justement.

SCÈNE IV

LE COMTE, GASPARIN

LE COMTE: Quoi! vous sortez déjà, mon cher Gasparin?

GASPARIN, *tirant sa montre*: Oui, monsieur le Comte. Quoiqu'il ne soit guère que trois heures, je vais à ma petite maison y faire arranger une manière de petite alcôve galante. Vous soupez avec nous?

LE COMTE: Je compte là-dessus, mais je suis heureux de ne vous avoir pas manqué, car j'ai une confidence, et un emprunt, à vous faire, mon cher Gasparin.

GASPARIN: Voyons, monsieur le Comte, ce que c'est.

LE COMTE, *hésitant un peu*: C'est... c'est... c'est une honnête femme, une citoyenne, fort belle, assez jeune, qui a même quelque esprit, et dont j'ai envie depuis longtemps. Or voici le fait. Je puis l'avoir si je veux, mon ami, pour deux cents louis. Cela n'est pas plus fin que cela.

GASPARIN: Allons donc! et vous appelez cela une honnête femme?

LE COMTE: Eh mais il le faut bien! Son mari a quatre-vingt mille livres de rente; vois si ce n'est pas là une honnête femme?

GASPARIN: Est-il possible?

LE COMTE: Oh! si possible que si vous voulez, mon cher Gasparin, me prêter les deux cents louis...

GASPARIN: Eh mais, monsieur le Comte...

LE COMTE, *avec un peu de hauteur*: Quoi mais?... Quoi donc?

GASPARIN: Eh non, je suis tout prêt à vous les donner, mais c'est que je me fais une conscience de prêter de l'argent pour cela; vous vous en repentiriez, et vous me reprocheriez... Quel diable! Une femme comme celle-là ne vaut pas deux cents louis.

LE COMTE: Oh! je conviens de cela; elle ne les vaut pas.

GASPARIN: Elle a beau être la femme d'un homme riche, c'est une créature que cela.

LE COMTE, *riant*: Ah! ah! ah! ah! Si je vous la nommais, vous ne m'en parleriez pas comme cela, mon cher.

GASPARIN: Eh! dites-moi son nom, que je voie si je la connais.

LE COMTE: Je ne le puis, en conscience.

GASPARIN: Voilà un beau scrupule! Une femme comme celle-là mérite-t-elle des ménagements?

LE COMTE: Non, ce n'est pas une femme de qualité, ce n'est point une femme qui ait un nom; mais c'est qu'il vous est connu.

GASPARIN: Eh bien, par conséquent...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant avec une sorte d'impatience*: Par conséquent, vous ne le saurez pas. Allons au fait, mon cher Gasparin: voulez-vous me prêter ces deux cents louis, ou me laisserez-vous aller à l'usurier?... Déjà... C'est que la tête me tourne de cette aventure-là... et je suis déterminé...

GASPARIN, *lui donnant l'argent*: Ah, parbleu, plutôt que de vous laisser aller à l'usurier, tenez, voilà les deux cents louis que je viens de recevoir d'une répartition, et que j'avais mis dans ma bourse de jeu.

LE COMTE, *prenant l'argent*: Mille grâces très humbles.

GASPARIN: Tenez, j'ai pourtant du regret.

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Console-toi, mon ami, je tâcherai de l'avoir pour rien. Avec une pareille espèce on peut bien marchander, n'est-ce pas?

GASPARIN: Sûrement! Parbleu! tâchez de l'avoir pour rien, cela en sera mille fois plus plaisant. Ah çà, je vous laisse.

LE COMTE, *le retenant*: À propos, j'oubliais. Eh, mon ami, terminons le mariage de Sophie et du chevalier; finissons cela; unissons ces petites bonnes gens, qui en meurent d'envie!

GASPARIN: La peste! Je le crois bien que le chevalier voudrait déjà avoir épousé Sophie! Indépendamment de deux cent mille écus, dont sa tante a la disposition, et qu'elle pourra fort bien être notre héritière à l'un et à l'autre, c'est que Sophie est une fille adorable... Ils disent tous qu'elle a de l'esprit comme les anges!... et d'ailleurs c'est que c'est le meilleur cœur... c'est tout plein de sentiment.. et le sentiment est leur cheval de bataille, aujourd'hui, comme vous savez!... Mais ce mariage dépend entièrement de Mme Gasparin... Vous avez du crédit sur son esprit; tâchez de la déterminer; je vous seconderai... Ah çà, vous permettez...

Il s'en va.

LE COMTE, *parlant du côté par lequel Gasparin est sorti*: Je saurai bien l'amener là sans vous, mon pauvre ami, actuellement que j'ai votre argent.

SCÈNE V

LE COMTE, *seul.*

Cela est divin! sublime! Ce cher mari qui me prête de l'argent pour payer sa femme, cela est unique! Et puis cette petite femme va peut-être jouer le sentiment avec moi, comme vient de dire son mari; je vais avoir de sa part une scène de la première tendresse, et de la dernière fausseté... Je vais bien m'en donner la comédie. Il est sûr, d'abord, que je puis pousser la plaisanterie aussi loin qu'il me plaira. Le bon Gasparin est un peu imbécile... C'est un de ces financiers épais, tels qu'ils étaient autrefois; cela ne voit et cela n'entend que le son des écus. Mais voici la divine Gasparin.

SCÈNE VI

LE COMTE, MME GASPARIN

MME GASPARIN, *d'un air de retenue*: Enfin, monsieur le Comte, vous voilà!... Je vous attendais avec la plus grande impatience.

LE COMTE: Et moi, Reine, j'arrive exprès de la campagne pour voler à vos ordres, et vous apporter les deux cents louis...

Tirant la bourse que vient de lui donner Gasparin.

MME GASPARIN, *l'interrompant*: Laissons cela, monsieur, j'aurais trop à rougir...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Rougir? Eh! de quoi donc, madame? serait-ce de la passion que vous m'avez inspirée? Votre lettre m'avait donné lieu de penser qu'elle vous avait touchée?

MME GASPARIN, *affectant l'air embarrassé*: Quand je vous l'ai écrite, j'avais la tête perdue par les revers que je venais d'essuyer au jeu, et par le peu de ressources que je me voyais pour m'en relever... L'estime singulière que j'ai toujours faite de vos sentiments m'avait d'abord fait imaginer de m'adresser à vous...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Eh bien, madame, c'est le parti le plus sage que vous ayez pu prendre.

MME GASPARIN, *l'interrompant*: Pardonnez-moi, monsieur. La réflexion m'a fait sentir combien il était dangereux pour moi de vous avoir obligation.

LE COMTE: Dangereux pour vous? Mais en quoi donc, s'il vous plaît? N'est-il pas tout naturel de s'adresser à une personne dont on est sûr d'être aimé?... Car je ne crois pas que vous puissiez douter de mon amour... En vérité je raffole de vous!

MME GASPARIN: Eh! c'est précisément tout cela qui m'effraye, et qui me détermine à me défaire plutôt d'une partie de mes diamants. Et c'était pour vous le dire que je vous attendais.

LE COMTE, *feignant d'être fâché*: Allons, madame, vous ne m'aimez point; cela est clair. Je me suis abusé; votre billet a causé mon erreur; j'avais cru y reconnaître l'amour, sous le voile de la confiance; mais, je le vois, je ne suis qu'un visionnaire. Non, vous ne m'aimez pas; vous ne m'aimerez jamais... Je suis bien malheureux!

MME GASPARIN, *tendrement et baissant les yeux*: Ou bien injuste!

LE COMTE, *avec un feint tansport, et d'un ton léger*: Ah! vous me rendez la vie!... Mais promettez-moi donc d'abandonner le cruel dessein que vous aviez de vous défaire de vos diamants; j'ai ici de quoi vous sauver ce désagrément. Promettez-le-moi; je l'exige de vous. Je dis plus: je le veux absolument.

MME GASPARIN, *d'un ton de mollesse*: Mais, de grâce, monsieur le Comte, n'exigez pas ce sacrifice-là de moi, je vous en prie. Tenez, je sens que ma délicatesse serait blessée...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant vivement et légèrement*: Vous parlez de délicatesse? Mais savez-vous que vous offensez prodigieusement la mienne quand vous balancez? Mais, si j'étais aussi vétillard que vous l'êtes sur le sentiment, savez-vous bien que vous me feriez imaginer que vous pensez que le plaisir que je

vous fais me coûte quelque chose?... et, en honneur, cela ne me coûte rien; mais rien; d'honneur, rien!

MME GASPARIN: Ah, Comte, plus vous mettez de noblesse dans vos procédés, et plus vous excitez ma reconnaissance...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: De la reconnaissance? ah! je vous supplie, bannissons cette expression. Je vous aime à la fureur, j'ose me flatter que je ne vous suis pas indifférent. Cette vérité une fois établie, tout est dit; la reconnaissance, la délicatesse n'ont plus que faire là. C'est de l'amour dont il s'agit, du véritable amour, de celui qui rend tout commun, jusqu'à la fortune, entre gens qui en sont atteints et convaincus.

MME GASPARIN, *tendrement*: J'aurais mieux fait de ne vous point voir, comme d'abord j'en avais eu l'idée, car vous me persuadez tout ce que vous voulez.

LE COMTE, *très légèrement*: Voilà, assurément, une belle idée que vous aviez là! Je devrais vous en quereller... (*Il lui baise la main.*) Mais je n'aime point les querelles. Vous êtes bien heureuse que je ne donne pas dans toutes ces misères d'amant-là.

MME GASPARIN, *gracieusement*: Oh! vous avez bien raison; il vaut cent fois mieux vivre en paix.

SCÈNE VII

SOPHIE, LE CHEVALIER, MME GASPARIN, LE COMTE

LE COMTE, *apercevant Sophie et le chevalier, continue tout de suite*: (*À part.*) Voilà des témoins; profitons de l'occasion... (*Haut, à Mme Gasparin, en lui donnant la bourse.*) Tenez, madame, voilà deux cents louis, que vous aurez la bonté de remettre à monsieur votre mari.

MME GASPARIN, *à part, pendant que le comte salue Sophie*: Il a donné adroitement le change à ma nièce et au chevalier, qui nous ont surpris. (*Haut et tendrement.*) Monsieur le Comte, ne vous faut-il pas de cela une petite reconnaissance?

LE COMTE: Comme vous voudrez, madame.

MME GASPARIN: Passons donc dans mon cabinet; je serai bien aise que ce soit une affaire finie.

LE COMTE: Je vous suis, madame. (*À Sophie et au chevalier.*) Soyez tranquilles, mes enfants; je m'en vais travailler pour vous.

Il sort avec Mme Gasparin.

SCÈNE VIII

LE CHEVALIER, SOPHIE

SOPHIE, *avec empressement*: Eh! bien, Chevalier, vous n'avez pas eu le temps de me dire tantôt quel expédient le Comte avait trouvé pour faire consentir ma tante à notre mariage?

LE CHEVALIER: Tout ce qu'il m'a dit, ma chère Sophie, c'est que cet expédient était immanquable; mais il ne m'a pas dit ce que c'était. Ah Sophie! pourquoi, en attendant ce consentement, ne pas assurer votre sort par un hymen secret?

SOPHIE, *d'un ton ferme et tendre*: Non, Chevalier, je ne m'y prêterai jamais; il y va de votre intérêt.

LE CHEVALIER, *vivement*: Ah! c'est le vôtre que j'envisage uniquement.

SOPHIE: Le mien ne m'est rien... Je ne suis plus un parti qui vous convienne si ma tante ne fait point notre mariage. Tous les biens que je puis vous apporter ne peuvent venir que d'elle et de son consentement à notre mariage: enfin j'attends tout d'elle; et ce n'est que pour vous que je l'attends.

LE CHEVALIER: Eh! que me font vos biens, pourvu que je sois assuré de vous avoir pour femme? Eh quoi, ne dois-je pas appréhender?...

SOPHIE, *l'interrompant*: Pourquoi ces craintes, Chevalier? Elles sont faites pour m'offenser, quand j'ai tout employé pour les bannir.

LE CHEVALIER, *très vivement*: Ah! vous me rappelez les plus doux moments de ma vie! Mais, généreuse et divine Sophie, plus vous avez fait pour moi, et plus je sens la nécessité d'assurer votre sort.

SOPHIE, *d'un ton décidé*: Mon sort est assuré, puisque je vous en ai rendu l'arbitre absolu. Je n'ai à cet égard ni doute, ni crainte. Plus je vous ai donné de droits sur moi, plus je suis certaine d'en avoir acquis sur votre cœur et sur votre probité.

LE CHEVALIER, *impétueuesement*: Ah! sans doute. Et ce sont ces mêmes droits qui réclament pour vous, au fond de mon cœur, et qui me font désirer avec passion d'être honoré du nom de votre époux.

SOPHIE, *avec force*: Je vous épouserai, Chevalier, et ce ne sera point en secret, je vous le prédis. Ma tante se rendra lorsqu'elle verra que rien ne peut ébranler ma constance et ma fermeté... Je compte sur les mêmes vertus de votre part... (*Tendrement*.) Eh! vous les avez!... Non, mon cher Chevalier, vous ne pouvez vivre sans moi; je connais votre cœur... Eh! ne l'éprouvé-je pas par le mien?... Sophie pourrait-elle vivre sans vous?

LE CHEVALIER, *de l'air le plus passionné*: Ah! que vous lisez bien dans mon âme!... Je vous adore, Sophie; oui, je vous adore. Mais que vous savez bien aimer aussi! Ce n'est pas seulement dans vos discours que je découvre votre tendresse pour moi... un geste, un soupir, un regard...; avec vous mon âme jouit toujours.

SOPHIE, *d'un ton ferme*: Eh bien, goûtons donc notre bonheur présent, et attendons avec fermeté un avenir encore plus heureux.

LE CHEVALIER, *impétueusement*: Non, Sophie, non. Il manque à présent à mon bonheur les liens d'un hymen secret. Je voudrais qu'il y eût des chaînes plus fortes que celles du mariage pour m'unir encore plus étroitement avec vous... Et, d'ailleurs, Sophie, voulez-vous que je vous laisse exposée à la malignité des hommes? Du moins, si notre intelligence se découvrait, cet hymen secret vous mettrait, autant qu'il aurait été en moi, à l'abri des propos d'un public pervers.

SOPHIE, *avec dignité*: Eh! que m'importe le jugement du reste des hommes? (*De l'air le plus passionné.*) Tu es tout pour moi; tu es seul pour moi dans l'univers; le reste de la terre ne m'est rien... l'amour l'a anéanti pour nous.

LE CHEVALIER, *avec transport*: Quelle âme! quelle force! quelle dignité! quelle vérité dans le caractère! Ah! vous me pénétrez d'amour et d'admiration!

SOPHIE, *très tendrement et très vivement*: Avant que d'être sûre de ton cœur... (car je t'ai aimé la première; tu ne saurais me disputer cet avantage...) Avant, dis-je, d'être sûre de ton cœur, je mettais toute ma gloire à te résister... (*Avec la plus grande vivacité.*) Je la fais consister, à présent, à te prévenir en tout, à m'immoler à toi dans tout, et à ne rien dérober aux transports de l'amour extrême que tu ressens, et que tu m'as inspiré... Car, je te l'ai dit bien des fois... je n'ai jamais cru que la vertu d'une femme... (libre de tout engagement) consistât à ne point se rendre à celui qu'elle aime... Non, Chevalier, mon estime, ma confiance, et mon amour pour toi, m'ont fait triompher de cette faiblesse qui fait rougir une amante d'avoir tout sacrifié à son amant. Mon honneur, mes devoirs, ma vertu sont de t'aimer; mon bonheur, que tu sois convaincu de cet amour, et que tu m'aimes, s'il est possible, autant qu je t'aime moi-même.

LE CHEVALIER, *avec le dernier transport*: Ah! Sophie, Sophie! vous me faites éprouver, dans ce moment, qu'il y a dans le sentiment des plaisirs supérieurs à tous les autres, que l'amour peut donner! Oui, ce que vous venez de me dire, en me parlant de votre amour, quand vous vous honorez de votre défaite, a fait passer dans mon âme une sorte de volupté que je n'ai jamais sentie qu'avec vous... C'est une ivresse délicieuse de l'âme... Ah, Sophie, achève mon bonheur! consens à notre mariage secret.

Il se jette à ses genoux.

SCÈNE IX

GASPARIN, SOPHIE, LE CHEVALIER

GASPARIN, *surprenant le chevalier aux pieds de Sophie*: Eh bien, eh bien, êtes-vous fous, vous autres? Êtes-vous fous? Et si ma femme, qui est une madame honesta, vous avait surpris dans cette attitude touchante? En vérité, monsieur le Chevalier, vous êtes bien imprudent! Par bonheur que c'est moi, et que ma femme est occupée ailleurs.

SOPHIE: Ah! mon oncle, soyez donc sensible à...

LE CHEVALIER, *l'interrompant vivement*: Ah, monsieur, monsieur, déterminez Mme Gasparin; qu'elle ne diffère pas plus longtemps à nous unir!

GASPARIN: Eh mais, vraiment oui, je vois très bien que cela presse. La peste! Mais vous savez que ma chère moitié n'est pas tendre quand il s'agit de donner de l'argent. Mais la voici qui s'avance avec M. le Comte. Revenez dans un moment tous deux; on ne peut pas décemment traiter votre mariage en votre présence, mes enfants.

LE CHEVALIER, *bas à Sophie*: J'espère que M. le Comte aura fait de bonne besogne.

SOPHIE, *bas au chevalier*: Il a le visage riant; il a tout l'air d'avoir réussi.

Le chevalier et Sophie se retirent.

SCÈNE X

MME GASPARIN, LE COMTE, GASPARIN

GASPARIN: Eh! d'où venez-vous donc, vous autres? Avouez, madame, que, par la chaleur qu'il fait, il faut que vous affectionniez bien ce damné boudoir, pour vous y tenir?

LE COMTE: Il n'y a pas deux minutes que nous y sommes, mon cher; je ne fais que de rentrer, moi.

MME GASPARIN, *reprenant vivement*: Cela est vrai, M. le Comte arrive dans l'instant.

GASPARIN: Et, à propos, monsieur le Comte, votre affaire a donc manqué, que vous voilà revenu si tôt?

LE COMTE: Comment! si tôt? Il y a déjà quelque peu de temps que je t'ai quitté, et en très peu de temps un conquérant comme moi fait bien des choses! Va, va, ne sois pas inquiet, l'affaire est consommée, et très consommée.

MME GASPARIN: Qu'est-ce que c'est donc?

GASPARIN: Oh! c'est que vous ne savez donc pas son histoire?... Ces jours-ci, une fort honnête dame, de par le monde, lui a fait des propositions assez malhonnêtes à tous égards, et... Mais on vous contera cela... Je suis impatient à présent de savoir si vous êtes content, monsieur le Comte.

LE COMTE: Oh! je suis excessivement content, mon ami; mets-toi en tête d'abord que c'est peut-être une des femmes de Paris des plus souhaitables.

GASPARIN: Bon! bon! d'abord. Tenez, sans être belle, Mme Gasparin a cela, par exemple.

MME GASPARIN: Allons, mon ami, soyez donc sage. (*Bas au comte.*) Êtes-vous fou de risquer une pareille plaisanterie?

GASPARIN: Et de grâce, dites donc.

LE COMTE: Eh bien, mon cher, c'est un teint! des yeux!... les plus beaux bras! la plus belle main!

MME GASPARIN, *l'interrompant*: De grâce, monsieur, épargnez-moi des détails aussi singuliers! (*Bas.*) Perdez-vous l'esprit?

GASPARIN: Laissez-le donc dire; s'il louait cette femme sur des beautés que vous n'eussiez pas, alors je ne serais point étonné que votre amour-propre fermât la bouche à M. le Comte; mais quel diable, n'avez-vous pas les plus belles mains du monde? Ainsi ne l'interrompez donc pas. Eh bien, eh bien, monsieur le Comte?

LE COMTE: Eh bien, mon ami, c'est... que veux-tu que je te dise? un teint de la dernière fraîcheur, un embonpoint raisonnable... des trésors...

MME GASPARIN, *l'interrompant encore*: Doucement donc, messieurs, doucement! Voilà des propos! Je ne suis point ridicule; mais une femme qui se respecte n'est point faite pour entendre toutes ces folies-là. Je m'en vais vous quitter, messieurs.

GASPARIN: Et cela parce qu'on loue une autre femme devant nous. Voilà comme vous êtes toutes. Si c'était de vous dont il fût question et dont on dît des choses aussi agréables, vous ne nous menaceriez pas de vous enfuir?

MME GASPARIN: Ce n'est point cela, messieurs. Mais c'est que cela devient trop fort. (*Bas au comte.*) Cessez donc cette badinerie; elle m'inquiète.

GASPARIN: Malgré ce qu'elle vous dit tout bas, continuez toujours, croyez-moi.

LE COMTE: Eh bien, pour ne pas déplaire à madame, je finirai en disant que c'est une femme vive, enjouée, et pourtant tendre à l'excès, quand il faut l'être.

GASPARIN: Oh! voilà, madame, par exemple, ce qui vous manque, à vous!

MME GASPARIN: Eh! qu'ai-je affaire là, moi, monsieur?

GASPARIN: Oh! c'est que Mme Gasparin est une belle statue, un beau marbre; et puis voilà tout.

LE COMTE: Cette femme-là ne ressemble donc pas à madame; rien n'est si différent!

GASPARIN: Eh mais, tant pis pour madame, à la vertu près; cependant... Eh bien, achevez donc.

LE COMTE, *d'un air froid et fat*: Tout est dit, mon ami; j'en suis amoureux... amoureux fou!

MME GASPARIN, *d'un air inquiet*: Vous amoureux, monsieur le Comte?

LE COMTE, *avec sang-froid, et d'un air de fatuité et de persiflage*: Oui, madame, amoureux, à en perdre la tête; et ce qui en est cause, c'est que je ne puis douter que je ne l'aie passionnée, et qu'elle m'aime aussi à la fureur.

GASPARIN, *ironiquement, et lui riant au nez*: Vous en êtes aimé à la fureur? Vous croyez cela! Cependant, elle n'a pas moins pris vos deux cents louis? (*À*

sa femme.) Car j'avais oublié de vous dire que cette femme avait mis cette noble condition à son marché. (*Au comte.*) Elle vous adore donc; et elle a pris votre argent?

LE COMTE: Point du tout, mon ami, point du tout; elle m'a rendu tes deux cents louis; et cela est si vrai que je viens dans l'instant de les remettre à madame, en présence du chevalier et de Sophie, et dans la même bourse que tu me les a donnés.

MME GASPARIN, *à part*: Quel fourbe!

GASPARIN: Vous avez mes deux cents louis, madame?

MME GASPARIN, *hésitant, et d'un air très embarrassé*: Oui, monsieur... oui... monsieur.

LE COMTE: Oui, madame n'est entrée dans son cabinet que pour les serrer dans sa petite armoire.

MME GASPARIN, *à part*: Peut-on être plus cruellement dupe?

GASPARIN: Ah çà, madame, si vous vouliez bien me faire l'honneur de me rendre mes deux cents louis; et tout à l'heure.

MME GASPARIN, *d'un air d'humeur*: Oh! tout à l'heure, monsieur, tout à l'heure; je vais vous les chercher; n'avez-vous pas peur?... (*Au comte, en s'en allant.*) Vous êtes un monstre.

Elle sort.

SCÈNE XI

LE COMTE, GASPARIN

LE COMTE: Ah çà, mon cher ami, au retour de ta chère femme, décidons-la pour le mariage du chevalier; finissons cela.

GASPARIN: Oui, oui. Mais dites-moi donc, monsieur le Comte, par quel miracle vous-a-t-on rendu votre argent, donc?

LE COMTE, *à part*: Que lui dirai-je? (*Haut, d'un air embarrassé.*) Eh mais, mon cher, c'est que... c'est que j'ai eu affaire à une femme équitable, remplie de justice.

GASPARIN: Comment?

LE COMTE: Elle a d'abord pris l'argent.

GASPARIN: Et pourquoi donc ensuite l'a-t-elle rendu?

LE COMTE: Par un esprit de justice, te dis-je... Elle s'est crue obligée de payer de quelque retour... les attentions... suivies...

GASPARIN, *l'interrompant d'un air riant*: Bon! quel chien de conte!

LE COMTE: Oh non, cela est vrai. Est-ce à un ami qui m'a prêté si généreusement son argent pour cela que je voudrais en imposer?

GASPARIN: Allons donc, allons donc, vous badinez!

LE COMTE: Non, encore un coup, cela est comme je te le dis; et comme, par un hasard qui n'arrivera plus, je suis tombé sur l'âme la plus généreuse et la plus reconnaissante, elle s'est piquée d'avoir de bons procédés aussi de son côté.

GASPARIN, *riant*: Oh! cela est trop plaisant! Voilà une femme que j'estime, par exemple! Voilà une femme qui a des mœurs, celle-là.

LE COMTE: Oh dame, mon roi, voilà la grande manière de forcer les femmes à rendre, ou à ne pas prendre d'argent.

GASPARIN: Monsieur, j'en fais mon compliment à la femme que vous avez eue; je vous prie de le lui dire.

LE COMTE: Je n'y manquerai pas.

GASPARIN: Je ne vous aurais jamais cru si merveilleux.

LE COMTE: Tu n'avais qu'à le demander; toutes les femmes te l'auraient dit.

SCÈNE XII

MME GASPARIN, LE COMTE, GASPARIN

MME GASPARIN, *rapportant l'argent et le rendant de mauvaise grâce*: Tenez, monsieur, voilà votre argent, tenez.

LE COMTE: Parbleu, mon ami, madame vous rend votre argent de si bonne grâce que vous devriez le lui laisser; c'est une galanterie qu'elle mérite de vous à tous égards.

GASPARIN, *reprenant la bourse*: Au contraire, je lui demande de l'argent, moi, en la pressant de conclure le mariage de Sophie et du chevalier.

MME GASPARIN, *d'un ton d'humeur*: Eh, monsieur, ne vous ai-je pas dit, cent fois, que M. le Chevalier n'était pas assez riche pour...

LE COMTE, *l'interrompant*: Eh mais, prenez donc garde, ma chère dame, qu'il est homme de grande qualité; qu'il m'appartient de très près. Capitaine de cavalerie à vingt-deux ans; quel diable! il ne faut qu'un malheur pour qu'il ait un régiment.

GASPARIN: Eh mais, entrez donc dans ces raisons.

MME GASPARIN, *d'un ton sec*: Vous appelez cela des raisons!

LE COMTE, *d'un ton imposant*: Oh bien, j'en vais dire à madame qui peut-être lui feront plus d'impression. Tenez, monsieur Gasparin, allez chercher ces deux jeunes amants; qu'ils viennent se jeter aux pieds de madame; pendant ce temps-là...

GASPARIN, *l'interrompant*: Je vais vous les amener moi-même; nous tomberons à ses genoux... nous... nous... Allons, allons, je vais vous les faire venir.

Il sort.

SCÈNE XIII

MME GASPARIN, LE COMTE

LE COMTE, *d'un air tranquille*: Ah çà, madame, vous voyez combien je désire ce mariage; est-ce trop me flatter que de croire que vous me devez quelque complaisance?

MME GASPARIN, *vivement*: Moi, monsieur? Je ne vous dois que ma haine... Après l'indignité et l'horreur de votre procédé avec moi, c'est abuser du mépris que j'ai pour vous que d'exiger d'autres sentiments de ma part.

LE COMTE, *froidement*: Mais, attendez donc, ma belle dame...

MME GASPARIN, *l'interrompant vivement*: Que voulez-vous que j'attende pour vous détester, monsieur? Vous trahissez ma confiance et mon amour! vous profitez inhumainement, pour me tromper, du malheur inouï qui m'est arrivé au jeu! vous terminez enfin tout cela par me faire l'objet de la plus cruelle et de la plus sanglante plaisanterie! et devant mon mari encore!... et après cela vous venez me demander froidement des grâces, quand vous devriez avoir tout à craindre des effets de ma vengeance?

LE COMTE, *toujours se possédant*: Oh! de la vengeance!... doucement, madame, doucement. Mon procédé n'est point aussi odieux qu'il le paraît. Je savais, je suis sûr, et il m'est démontré que votre perte au jeu est purement imaginaire.

MME GASPARIN, *à part*: Ô ciel! qui peut lui avoir dit?...

LE COMTE, *avec un sang-froid plus affecté encore*: D'ailleurs, madame, il n'est nullement prudent de se brouiller avec quelqu'un qui a notre secret... Il est vrai que je suis trop galant homme pour en abuser, et que vous pouvez penser assez bien de moi...

MME GASPARIN, *impétueusement*: Oh! je pense, monsieur, que l'on ne vous croira pas; voilà tout ce que je pense de bien de vous. Toutes les femmes prendront mon parti; elles sont toutes intéressées à ne point laisser prendre créance à des histoires pareilles; elles feront regarder celles que vous débiterez sur mon compte comme une fable odieuse, et la calomnie la plus atroce.

LE COMTE: Eh, madame, au contraire, par jalousie, par envie, elles appuieraient toutes le conte que je ferais de vous.

MME GASPARIN, *à part*: Oh! cela n'est que trop vrai.

LE COMTE, *d'un ton de persiflage amer*: Et puis, sans cela même, j'ai une lettre de vous, qui ferait une preuve bien convaincante de cette cruelle anecdote. Mais cette lettre, je ne la lirai à personne. Je suis incapable, comme je vous le dis, de conter cette histoire-là, ni en prose, ni en vers; quoique je tourne passablement

bien quelquefois un couplet, je me regarderais comme un peu trop méchant de vous chansonner... Oh! je suis à cent lieues de ces procédés-là, moi, j'en suis à cent lieues.

MME GASPARIN, *se radoucissant*: Ah, cruel! du ton dont vous le dites, je prévois que vous vous préparez à me faire toutes les noirceurs...

LE COMTE, *d'un ton le plus naturel*: Non, madame, non, je vous arrête là. Consentez au mariage de mon parent, et je vous donne ma parole d'honneur de ne jamais conter l'aventure en question, même sous des noms supposés; je vous en donne ma parole d'honneur, et je vous rends votre lettre.

SCÈNE XIV

et dernière

LE COMTE DE GULPHAR, MME GASPARIN, SOPHIE, LE CHEVALIER, GASPARIN

GASPARIN: Tiens, madame Gasparin, prends pitié de ces pauvres enfants; ils me fendent le cœur!

LE CHEVALIER, *aux genoux de Mme Gasparin*: Ah, madame, rendez-moi le plus heureux des hommes!

SOPHIE, *aussi aux pieds de sa tante*: Ah, ma tante, ce n'est que dans vos bontés...

GASPARIN, *l'interrompant*: Tiens, madame Gasparin, peu s'en faut que je ne me jette aussi à tes pieds, pour...

LE COMTE, *d'un ton imposant et de maître*: Allons, madame, un tableau aussi touchant et les raisons que je viens de vous donner ne vous permettent plus de balancer un moment.

MME GASPARIN, *d'un air contraint*: Eh bien, je me rends donc, puisque ce mariage fait votre bonheur...; et qu'il m'acquiert un ami dans M. le Comte... (*Bas au Comte.*) Rendez-moi cette cruelle lettre.

LE COMTE, *la lui rendant*: Cela est juste. (*Haut.*) Oh, madame, je vous suis acquis pour la vie! (*À part.*) Elle me craint plus qu'elle ne m'aime.

LE CHEVALIER: Ah, madame, que de remerciements!

SOPHIE: Ah, ma tante, que de grâces!

GASPARIN: *d'un air de bonhomie*: En voilà assez, mes enfants. Mais, en vérité, monsieur le Comte, je commence à croire que vous êtes un homme très singulier avec les femmes, puisque vous faites de la mienne tout ce que vous voulez, et que vous l'avez déterminée à nous donner son consentement... et cela en moins de temps qu'il n'y a que j'en parle. Eh mais, madame, c'est un diable que cet homme-là!

MME GASPARIN, *d'un air d'embarras*: Mais je ne suis point déraisonnable, moi! Et, pour peu que l'on m'éclaire, je ne demande pas mieux que de céder.

GASPARIN: Oui, vous vous rendez à la raison; cela est singulier! Eh bien, il faut donc que, de mon côté aussi, je fasse bien les choses. (*Tirant de sa poche les deux cents louis*.) Voici ces deux cents louis qui me sont revenus, et que Mme Sophie me permettra de lui présenter pour son présent de noces.

SOPHIE: Je vous suis obligée, mon oncle. Mais permettez-moi de ne vous marquer ma sensibilité, ainsi qu'à ma tante, que sur le bonheur dont vous me comblez en me faisant épouser le chevalier.

GASPARIN: C'est penser bien noblement!... Soyez, mes chers enfants, toujours bien amoureux, toujours heureux. Et vous, monsieur le Comte, continuez de l'être avec la femme à sentiment que vous avez trouvée.

MME GASPARIN: Oui, oui; mais laissons cela, et envoyons chercher le notaire.

LE COMTE: Le notaire? C'est bien dit. Et, en l'attendant, divertissons-nous, et chantons.

VAUDEVILLE

Air: *Tout est dit.*

LE CHEVALIER

Quand la moindre chose intéresse,

Qu'on se rend des soins empressés,

Que l'on vit ensemble sans cesse,

Et qu'on croit n'y pas vivre assez;

Lorsqu'Iris vous paraît toujours plus belle,

Qu'elle vous voit plus aimable, à son tour,

Cela s'appelle

De l'amour.

2

M. GASPARIN

Trouver une âme généreuse

Qui vous rend vos deux cents louis,

C'est avoir la main bien heureuse,

Ou des talents bien inouïs!

Continuez vos miracles pour elle;

Faites-lui voir, à chaque heure du jour,

Ce que j'appelle

De l'amour.

3

SOPHIE

Par une aveugle confiance

Ne pas se perdre follement;

Employer toute sa science

À bien connaître son amant;

Mais quand l'amant est honnête et fidèle,

S'y confier, s'y livrer sans détour,

Cela s'appelle

De l'amour.

4

MME GASPARIN, *au comte.*

Se trouver vieux dès sa jeunesse,
Être fat et plein d'agrément;
Sans rien sentir, parler sans cesse
De tendresse et de sentiment;
Sur le solide, et sur la bagatelle,
Tromper toutes les femmes tour à tour,
Cela s'appelle
De l'amour.

5

LE COMTE, *à Mme Gasparin*:

Se prendre et se quitter sans cause,
S'arranger par désœuvrement;
Enfin, pour faire quelque chose,
Changer tous les huit jours d'amant;
Avant ce temps souvent être infidèle,
N'est-ce pas là dans le monde, en ce jour,
Ce qui s'appelle
De l'amour?

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1 As mentioned in my translation strategy, it is the title which will first entice an audience to watch the play, particularly as the author is unknown. Having decided that the comte is the central character in the play, and should be reflected in the title as such (as in the source text), I did not want to shift the emphasis too much. A more literal translation such as The Galant Scoundrel sounded rather flat; the word scoundrel is slightly dated, however, in the sense of describing a gentleman who has mistreated a lady, and so this is in keeping with the hints of archaism which I want to retain in the target text. A more idiomatic translation is The Lovable Rogue. I did prefer this title to the above, but the expression has now become so much of a cliché that I felt it detracted from the originality of the play. The title I decided upon is a form of compensation; it is more eye-catching, and sounds more natural an expression in English than The Galant Scoundrel, for example. It also picks up on the social status of the main characters. The comte is a nobleman and behaves like a noble. The audience may not make an immediate connection, but the notion is echoed in the opening scene by the declaration that he is not a financier, he is a nobleman. The subsequent differences in register and costume, along with the various comments made about the financiers in the play, will then reinforce the social differences between the characters.

2 By moving the comte to the head of the cast list and mentioning his social status, this again reinforces the reference in the title to his being a nobleman. The target audience needs more information about the social status of the characters, in particular the comte and Gasparin. The eighteenth-century audience will have understood the possible tension between the nobility and the financiers: the target audience needs more explicit details in order to have some understanding of the various comments made by the comte, for example, throughout the play. Although it is impossible to recreate

the empathy the source audience may have felt with the comte, my additions can at least go some way to clarifying the situation.

I also felt it was necessary to add in the description 'roguish, yet charming and debonair' as the title I have chosen does not indicate the dual aspect of the comte's personality. If the cast list is retained in this form in the theatre programme, it gives the target audience a chance to assess the situation before the play begins.

3 My aim here was to convey two pieces of information: the fact that Gasparin's business dealings were not altogether honest, and the ambiguity of his social status. Again, this is a form of compensation; all this information would have been conveyed to the source audience in the word financier. Although this greatly lengthens the character description, I feel it is necessary at this point to explain in brief details the social background.

The added descripton of Gasparin's being overweight and red-faced is perhaps not necessary, but I feel the physical detail lends more depth to the character. The fact that he is overweight suggests that he is both wealthy and greedy; the red face makes him seem bumptious, which is in keeping with the comte's description of him in Scene 5.

4 As Mme Gasparin is not portrayed as a ridiculous, vain older woman, I thought it was fitting to suggest that she was attractive and quite young. The comte's description of her in Scene 10 as having 'un embonpoint raisonnable, des trésors' suggests that she is buxom – having her slightly plumpish also conjurs up the idea of her eating well, like her husband. To have Mme Gasparin as a rather willowy figure does not fit in with the image of her as being a strong, capable woman, despite her claims to the contrary in Scene 6.

5 The additions again prepare the audience for the difference in personality between the comte and the chevalier. Although this will hopefully become obvious during Scene 2, it means my target audience (and the

director and actors) are more prepared for what is in store. Collé's audience will have been aware of his previous work, and known how the characters were to have been played. This would have been clear to them even from the choice of actor Collé would have made, as some actors in the social circle would have been better known for certain roles.

6 As mentioned in my strategic decisions, the scenery would not have been specified by Collé, as there would have been no apparent need for it to be. If I wish to convey an eighteenth-century setting, however, some indication is necessary. The reasons for including the mirror and sofa will become clearer at a later point in the translation.

7 Costume is a further indication of their social status. As noblemen, both the chevalier and the comte are entitled to carry swords; even though the target audience may not be aware of this, it is still a means of differentiating between the noblemen and the financier. The fact that Gasparin has a similar style of clothes shows that he is modelling himself on the comte, but he fails as the garish colours show lack of taste. The chevalier's clothes are plainer than the comte's to indicate his slightly lower social status, his lack of money, and also his less flirtatious ways with women.

8 This detail is particularly important as concerns Mme Gasparin; the comte makes several comments about her ample bosom, and she gets extremely embarrassed in Scene 10 when the comte describes her figure to Gasparin. It may also be an important aspect of Sophie's appearance; the chevalier is trying hard in Scene 8 to play the part of the gentleman, but it is obvious that they are attracted to one another. Even if Sophie just leans towards him, it may be enough to make the chevalier seem flustered, showing his lack of experience where women are concerned.

9 The opening sentence of this speech is an example of how I want the dialogue to sound natural. Rather than having a more literal translation such

as 'You write very well', I opted for a more idiomatic expression. The actual sense is not changed as such; it is important, though, that the comte's enthusiasm and admiration for this woman is obvious through the language he uses. The 'eh! mais...' is a good example of the tonal markers in French which cannot always be directly translated in English. It is a case of identifying, and trying to capture, the same tone in the target text.

10 The comte's expression 'j'ai envie de vous avoir' is explicit compared with the chevalier's description of his feelings for Sophie in Scene 2, for example. The chevalier reacts indignantly when the comte asks the question 'l'as-tu?'; it is familiar language, typical of that which would have been acceptable for private theatre performances, rather than the royal theatre. I wanted to retain the element of familiarity without having the comte appearing lecherous. The syllable count is also noticeable in the ST; the sentence is almost equally divided, with thirteen syllables in the first half, and fourteen in the second. The comte sounds quite calculating at this point; he is weighing up his chances, and trying to work out the full significance of the letter. Consequently, I wanted to have a sentence which sounded quite balanced – i.e. the first half was not noticeably longer than the second, and vice-versa.

11 As the word 'tendre' occurs three lines later, I wanted to use an adjective or noun which would be suitable in both instances. The repetition is quite important as the comte is comparing her outward show of affection (what she has written in the letter) to his show of affection (the money she has asked for).

12 My target audience would not recognize 'louis' as currency; they would associate the name with past kings of France. Therefore, I decided to use the term 'francs' instead, as at least this is instantly recognizable by the audience. I did not feel it was particularly important to estimate how much

200 louis would have been, and convert this into francs; what is more important is that the audience gets the impression that Mme Gasparin is asking for rather a large sum of money – hence the change from two hundred to two thousand in translation.

13 As mentioned before, the ST audience would understand the implied reference to Gasparin's being dishonest, whereas my target audience will not immediately understand the point being made. In order to compensate for the target audience's lack of background knowledge, I chose to add the word 'crooked'. Although the reference is less subtle than the original comment, it does not leave the target audience confused about the possible social comment being made.

14 I have introduced the information about Mme Gasparin's husband at an earlier stage as a means of compensation for the fact that my target audience is much less aware of the existing tension and rivalry between the nobles and *financiers*. The comte's comment is the first sign of this rivalry, and the additional information in my TT means that the audience is more prepared for the underlying tension which exists between the comte and Gasparin.

15 The implied stage direction in the ST is that the comte looks directly at the audience as he says the comment in brackets; I have simply made the stage direction more explicit. In terms of eighteenth-century theatre, the comte is talking in a very familiar way to the audience – indicating that he winks to them is a physical means of suggesting the familiarity, over and above what he actually says. To a modern audience, he is not really saying anything shocking, but the situation would have been quite different two centuries ago. Although my intention is not to produce an equivalent sense of 'shocking language' for a modern audience, I feel every now and again there

is a need to show the sense of intimacy and familiarity which is a feature of the comte's monologues.

16 The more dated expression using 'person', rather than 'body', makes the comte sound more pompous, as though he were shocked. This strengthens the impression of the comte's hypocrisy, as it becomes obvious later in the play that his only concern is with managing to sleep with Mme Gasparin.

17 I did not feel it was necessary to retain the 'Tell me, Mme Gasparin' in the TT, as the audience already knows this is her letter, so there is no real need to repeat her name. Again, I felt the ST phrase was more of a tonal marker; the comte really does not say anything with the 'Ah çà, Madame Gasparin, répondez-moi.'

18 Even though I am retaining the original divisions of scene which are a convention of French theatre, I think it is important to meet the expectations of the British director and actors in that a stage direction indicates when a new character comes on or goes off stage.

19 If I were to translate 'mon petit chevalier' literally by 'my little chevalier', it sounds condescending, and in fact a little camp. The 'petit' is a term of endearment, and a clear indication that the chevalier is quite young; my main concern here was that the comte sounded quite informal and relaxed, as indeed he is throughout this scene in comparison with the chevalier. The comte also addresses the chevalier as 'tu', whereas the chevalier calls the comte 'vous'. This is most likely to be an indication of their age difference, although it is in keeping with the chevalier's tendency to follow convention. As there is no equivalent linguistic marker in English, their different attitudes towards one another must be apparent in their choice of vocabulary.

20 The word 'salut' had a different usage in the eighteenth century; it is the equivalent of a formal greeting, rather than the much less formal usage nowadays. The chevalier's greeting is not as relaxed as the comte's, which is why I made the distinction between 'hello' and 'good morning'. During this scene the chevalier is trying to answer the comte's questions in a way that he thinks a gentleman should, rather than simply exchanging gossip with his uncle. He chooses his words carefully, but sometimes he is thrown off guard. He addresses the comte by his full title here, which shows his attempt to stick to convention. In order to indicate to the target audience that the chevalier sound slightly awkward, I decided to have him correcting himself right from the beginning, deliberately making sure he does not call the comte his uncle. I did not, however, find it necessary to use the name Gulphar; it is not a common French name and I think the audience will recognize M. le comte as a form of address.

21 Although it is not specified in the play whether the two men are as closely related as uncle and nephew, making them more closely related makes the comte's interest in the chevalier's welfare more plausible.

22 To use 'I've been in the country' suggests that he had been abroad before, and had retuned five days ago. The comte is most likely to have been visiting friends in the country and had just returned to Paris; as this detail is not particularly important, I did not feel it was necessary to have a lengthier explanation, other than that he had been away for a few days. I also do not want my target audience to be under the impression that the comte owns a country house; I want to retain the image of his being an impoverished nobleman.

23 'La Gasparin' is slightly more dismissive than 'Mme Gasparin', hence the need to find a similar tone in translation. The idea here is that the comte sounds a little sarcastic as he mentions her name.

24 The phrase sounds a lot neater in English without translating the 'trois ou quatre jours'; it is obvious from the context that the gambling loss is a recent occurrence anyway.

25 I wanted to emphasize the chevalier's sense of indignation; to translate it as 'no, sir and...' was not forceful enough. As I lengthened the first phrase, it was better to have a new sentence to retain the emphasis of the ST.

26 I thought of using 'people are like that nowadays', but it sounded more like a grumpy complaint. 'Le monde' at this time was normally used in reference to high society, rather than the world at large.

27 The sentence structure of the ST adds a poetic dimension to the chevalier's speech; the structure is more complicated than, for example 'Comme je suis amoureux de sa nièce...' To give a slightly more exaggerated touch to the English version, I added the 'from the very moment'. This meant changing the tense from the ST, but I do not feel the meaning was changed as it is obvious that the chevalier is continuing to stay by Mme Gasparin's side.

28 The chevalier seems to realize that his explanation is rather confusing, which is why he needed to add the 'avec elle'. I decided to keep this element of the chevalier's apparent need to clarify what he is saying in the TT.

29 Here I concentrated on playability; the ST sentence is long, and when translated into one sentence in the TT it became even longer, and would have proved difficult for the actor to say without running short of breath. I have changed the ST considerably, in that I have placed a different emphasis on how difficult the chevalier found the whole experience by keeping this to the end. I felt this made a better link with the comte's following speech. Although I have translated with two sentences rather than one, both sentences are still quite long and rambling, and this reflects the chevalier's exaggerated speech. Little additions such as his calling her 'my darling Sophie' are tonal markers; the ST audience would have been more aware of the differences between the

chevalier's and the comte's language, whereas I feel there is a need to emphasize this distinction in the TT. As my intention is to make the language sound slightly dated anyway, the audience (and director/actors) may not always see that the chevalier's language is more flowery.

30 I preferrred to use the term 'a slander' for two reasons; firstly, it sounds more dated than, for example, 'it's all a lie'. Secondly, there are connotations of the story being likely to ruin Mme Gasparin's good name or reputation; as keeping up appearances was so important in this society this is a very apt term to use.

31 The fact that the comte uses the plural 'tes amours' shows that he is not just thinking of the chevalier's relationship with Sophie; he is perhaps assuming that the chevalier has more than one mistress. The phrase 'how's the love life?' is general in this sense, and also reflects the comte's less serious attitude to love. It is also sufficiently idiomatic to stand out from the chevalier's more idealized descriptions of Sophie, which really come to a head in the following speech.

32 This is an example of how using clichés such as love growing stronger every minute of every day can reflect the chevalier's flowery language. Just as the ST audience recognized the language of different genres, my target audience may see allusions to contemporary love songs, for example. My aim in this speech was to make the chevalier sound slightly ridiculous, particularly as the comte's gentle teasing will allow me to use much more down-to-earth phrases.

33 I thought of repeating the 'most' before each adjective in the sentence beginning with 'She's the most sensitive...'. In the end I found this unnecessary as the long list of adjectives would have the actor running short of breath. The repetition of the word 'and' was sufficient, as the chevalier still seems to be getting carried away with his long list of adjectives.

I also wanted to keep the sense of his having used such opposites as 'ferme' and 'tendre'; the chevalier's speech is rambling as he is so enraptured with Sophie.

34 The comte obviously find it amusing that the chevalier compares Sophie to a 'galant homme'; as the chevalier seems to be so concerned with acting like the perfect gentleman, I think it is necessary to retain the same image. The dictionary makes an important distinction between 'un galant homme' and 'un homme galant': 'le galant homme est celui qui a de la probité et de l'honneur; l'homme galant est celui qui se rend aimable auprès des dames' (Littré). This again makes the chevalier's comment seem peculiar, as it is hardly a romantic thing for him to say about the woman he loves. Directly comparing her with a man goes some way to conveying his unusual choice of image.

35 The reference to Phoebus would undoubtedly be lost to my target audience; I did not want to confuse the audience unnnecessarily by keeping the same reference. The most important thing here is that the comte is gently making fun of the chevalier's lack of experience.

36 Another option here was 'are you bedding her'. This does keep a touch of eighteenth-century raunchiness, but perhaps loses the force of the clipped expression of the ST. The word 'wench' firmly dates the text, even though 'have you had her' could be considered a modern expression.

37 It is almost as though the comte is talking to a child here; the difference between his experience with women and the chevalier's is the focus of the humour. There is a sense that, as between children, the comte wants the chevalier to share his secrets, which is why I chose expressions such as 'you're not telling' and 'I can tell'.

38 As the chevalier sounds quite indignant and pompous, I thought the sudden switch to 'Monsieur' rather than 'Sir' sounded more affected.

39 The chevalier is obviously quite shocked by the comte's choice of words and so he would probably find it quite difficult to use such an expression. He picks up on what he sees to be the comte's impertinence, and the way in which he says 'had her' will be quite important. Although there is no indication in the ST that the chevalier should put particular emphasis on this expression, I think this would have been done quite naturally by the actor concerned (and possibly by the TT actor anyway, hence my use of inverted commas rather than italics.)

40 I wanted something snappy here, as the exchanges are very fast and witty in the ST. I could have used something like 'admitted it', but the plosive 't' of 'told' is more forceful – the phrase is short, but will be heard very clearly by the audience.

41 I wanted a phrase which sounded condescending, but not too nasty as the comte is really only teasing him gently. This is quite a colourful, idiomatic expression, whereas something like 'you're so naive' is harsher.

42 Again, I changed the word order to have what seems to be the comte's motto at the end of the speech. The French expression 'cela se fait comme cela se dit' is very neat and concise; I wanted to have a similar sense of conciseness in my TT expression.

43 I wanted to make a clear distinction between the comte's blatant, down-to-earth vocabulary and the chevalier's pomposity.The chevalier's expressions sound more archaic in this scene, whereas the comte's language is in fact fairly modern. As mentioned in my strategic decisions, however, I did not want the use of modern slang to colour the text, which is why I chose to retain the use of 'dear boy'.

44 'Vicieux' in the eighteenth century referred to one's capacity for vice, rather than the modern meaning of nasty.

45 It is likely that the ST audience would have seen a reference to the drame bourgeois in this comment, as well as laughing at the comte's dismissal of the chevalier's moral stance. There is no avoiding the translation loss, as my target audience will not see any allusions to different genres. Instead, I wanted to emphasize the comte's cynical attitude to the chevalier's comments: the chevalier does sound as though he is preaching, and so the image of his giving a sermon fits in quite well.

46 I wanted to find an equivalent expression for the literary style of 'l'intérêt s'oppose à la plus belle union.' I imagine the chevalier at this point to look rather wistful as he mentions Sophie's name.

47 This question has to seem very blunt compared with the chevalier's poetic language of the previous speech. The comte constantly brings the conversation down to a lower level.

48 The hyperbole of the ST must be mirrored in the TT, as it is such a prominent feature of the chevalier's manner of speaking. I do not want to emphasize this point too much, as the chevalier is made to look naive, rather than ridiculous in the ST. The chevalier's language would certainly have sounded quite literary to the ST audience, but perhaps not as overly-sentimental as it seems to a modern audience.

49 The chevalier may have put Sophie on a pedestal, but the comte still refers to her as 'cette petite fille'; all he is interested in knowing is whether the chevalier has managed to sleep with her or not. The 'bedded' and 'wench' act both as archaisms and as tonal markers; the comte reduces Sophie to the level of a sex object, which makes the chevalier's literary language sound even more absurd.

50 If I had transposed the TT to a modern-day setting, I could have translated this comment with a reference to Mills and Boon novels, for example. This would have been some form of equivalent to the reputation of

novels in the eighteenth century. As this does not fit the context, my only option was to ensure the the tonal inference was the same as in the ST. It is obvious that the comte sees the chevalier as being overly sentimental; the 'you're like something out of...' shows his disbelief, and his mocking tone (albeit gentle mockery of the chevalier's love for Sophie.)

51 'Tes petites manières' is very condescending; the comte almost treats the chevalier like a child who has been misbehaving.

52 The TT does make it more obvious that Mme Gasparin's interest lies in money, but I feel this is where the force of the original comment lies. Rather than having a literal translation such as 'interested party' and trying to play on the word 'interest', I have tried to mirror the irony behind the comte's words. Trying to play on the word 'interest' made the sentence quite heavy; the phrase in English did not have the pithy quality of the ST.

53 This stage direction firmly sets the tone of the chevalier's speech; Collé frequently uses the word 'vivement' in this scene but it does not necessarily have to be rendered by the same word in English every time. As noted in my strategic decisions, Collé may not have felt the same need to give precise stage directions; he knew his actors, and could tell how they would play the different characters. This is not the case for the TT.

54 The launch into the chevalier's exposé is very abrupt; although the ST audience would have been accustomed to this type of background detail, I feel my target audience would be somewhat disconcerted by the obvious filling in of detail. The addition of this brief sentence is simply a means of bridging the gap between the chevalier's show of gratitude and his explanation of his relationship with Sophie. I did not feel I could shorten the speech, as the information is important to the understanding of the plot. There is quite a stilted effect to his speech in the ST also, as the comte must surely know this information and so it is an obvious attempt on the author's

part to let the audience know the context. Rather than trying further to make the telling of background information seem less obvious, I think the speech should retain the slight element of artificiality which is in the ST. This is a short play, and is not to be taken seriously to the point that the audience has to believe that everything is realistic. This is another element of how Collé shatters the illusion of theatricality; the monologues are obvious features of theatricality, and the chevalier's exposé could be seen in the same light.

55 Although the comte is simply shown to be laughing in the ST, I think it is better to make it obvious to the audience that the comte has actually been conjuring up a plan. This should come through in the actor's expression anyway, but it seems more natural to have some sort of indication from the comte that he has decided on a plan of action.

56 The 'vous me désespérez' is again very literary; the same term could have been used by a character from Racine, for example. I wanted to reflect the elevated language in the TT.

57 This acts as a reminder to the audience that the comte is related to the chevalier.

58 'Charming' could simply refer to Mme Gasparin's good breeding, whereas 'delectable' has more of a lecherous connotation.

59 The alliteration of 'petit publicain' and the 'ain' sound lends a phonetic quality to this expression which adds to the comte's obvious sense of disdain. Although I have not found an equivalent alliterative effect, the adjectives in the TT belittle the *financier* and are a clear indication of the comte's attitude towards Gasparin.

60 If I kept the French expression 'petite souris' or translated it literally as 'little mouse', this would probably have led to some confusion as the TT audience would have been wondering who the comte was referring to. Collé's audience may have known who the 'petite souris' was; if not, they would at

least have been quite familiar with the expression. As pointed out in my strategic decisions, I am always going to face translation loss because of any possible references to people that the duc's society may have known. I do not really see this as a major lacking in the translation; I was more concerned here with maintaining the tone of the original monologue. The comte shows disdain for Gasparin and a cavalier attitude towards women in this speech.

61 Although this adds more than the 'continuent' of the ST, I feel this is a good opportunity to emphasize the comte's annoyance that Gasparin has plenty of money, whereas he has very little. The expression 'throwing money about' suggests that Gasparin is extremely wealthy, and money is no object. He can afford to throw large sums away without giving it a second thought. It is also a clear indication of how money means power in this society: this expression echoes "throwing his weight about', which is in fact what Gasparin is able to do.

62 The time of day is not particularly important; as it sounded clumsy in English to say 'it may only be three o'clock but...' I decided to omit this. It is important, however, to retain the idea that Gasparin is setting out early in order to arrange a meeting with his mistress. The ST audience would have known immediately what a 'petite maison' and a 'petite alcôve galante' referred to; my audience needs more information at the beginning so that they are in no doubt as to how Gasparin sees it as perfectly natural to talk about his extra-marital affairs. Rich financiers were expected to have a mistress – or several mistresses in the eighteenth century; this would not have been considered unusual in any way.

63 The comte is quite conciliating in this speech; he is choosing his words very carefully. It is important to retain the balance of 'une confidence, et un emprunt...' , as it reflects this careful choice of words, and also his clarity of expresion and syntax makes his request seem even more straightforward.

64 The comte addresses him as 'mon cher Gasparin' several times after this point, particularly at those moments when he brings up the subject of money. As he is obviously being quite ingratiating at these moments, I think it is important to retain the repetition in translating 'mon cher Gasparin', indicating that he is obviously trying to win round the financier. Given the comte's previous comments about 'ce petit publicain', this must have more than a hint of irony, hence the emphasis on the 'dear'.

The comte has now changed his tone completely; he is no longer talking to the young, naive chevalier. He treats Gasparin as his social equal, even though the audience is well aware of his dislike of the financier. He is polite – perhaps excessively so – as he simply wants to get the money he is after. I have therefore tried to change the register at the beginning of the scene (the tone does change as Gasparin hears more details about the comte's arrangement with the woman in question).

65 The expression 'honnête femme' referred to a woman of moral substance.

66 I decided to keep the list of adjectives without adding in 'she's', as this reflects the comte's hesitant way of speaking – he has not had much time to prepare his spiel beforehand, and he obviously does not want to give the game away. It is also a case of making the comte's speech sound natural; people do not tend to talk in full sentences, he is simply adding to the description as the picture of Mme Gasparin comes into his head.

67 This is the first of a number of similar utterances by Gasparin. Gasparin's language differs from the comte's in that Gasparin is never quite so much in control of what he is saying. He uses expressions such as 'quel diable!' and 'la peste!', which are peculiar to him; I wanted to have a particular type of expression which would differentiate Gasparin's use of language from that of the other characters. I think it would be a little too extreme if Gasparin

were to swear all the time – he is not portrayed as uncouth or uneducated, and to have him as the only character swearing would perhaps give that impression. Instead, I decided that he should use expressions with 'God', or 'Lord'; although these expressions have become part of everyday language, they tend to sound more extreme in the play as only one character tends to use such expressions. As my intention is to give the impression of slightly archaic language, these expletives should have a blasphemous edge which a contemporary audience does not always recognize in modern dialogue. As Mme Gasparin is a much more calculating woman and she loses her temper at several points in the play, there may be a case for her to utter swear words.

68 I wanted to keep the word play of the ST. I first thought of 'Is it possible...' followed by 'It's more than possible...' but this sounded like calque, as it did not seem a natural response in English for the character of Gasparin.

69 'If you would only be so kind' rather than 'if you could' as it reflects how polite the comte is being. See also point 62.

70 A sudden change in tone as the comte is much more abrupt. The 'quoi' of the ST sounds harsh phonetically; this is reflected in the 'b' and 't' sounds of the TT.

71 Gasparin is a well-educated man; the use of expressions such as 'je me fais une conscience' and the conditional tense in this example shows that Gasparin is not the equivalent of the comic servant figure of Collé's parades. However, the next part of the speech is where Gasparin reveals his true thoughts, and where he seems to express himself more naturally.

72 I changed the sentence structure here, as I felt the sudden expression 'for the love of God' needed more warning. By mentioning the two thousand francs sooner, it also made he last phrase shorter and neater, which allowed for the comte's quicker riposte.

73 According to Littré, 'une créature' could be used in the sense of a 'femme galante, femme de mauvaise vie'.

74 The repetition of the word 'slut' was really for clarity here, as the audience may be taken by surprise by Gasparin's outburst, and it is even possible that some do not hear such a short word. It also adds to the humour, as the comte has been so polite to Gasparin during this conversation, and now as he repeats what Gasparin says it makes the distinction between their choice of vocabulary even more acute.

75 The tone with which 'une femme comme celle-là' is said is vital in the ST; the implication is that Gasparin is still very much convinced that he was right to class her as a 'slut'. 'A woman like that' did not seem quite derogatory enough; here, the audience will be fully aware of the character's attitude to the woman in question.

76 According to Littré, the expression 'homme / femme de qualité' signifies that the person thus described is of noble birth.

77 To translate the 'par conséquence' as 'consequently' meant that the retort lost some of its bluntness. I obviously wanted to have the comte finish Gasparin's sentence as this is a clear sign that he is beginning to lose patience.

78 The comte is really play acting by the end of the speech, trying to convince Gasparin that he is a desperate man. To translate the 'déjà' simply with 'already' did not seem plausible in English, in that the comte is obviously starting to say a sentence and then stops. It is not common in English to start a sentence with 'already', at least not in dialogue. The 'I'm beginning to' has the same effect as the 'déjà' in French, in that the comte wants to give the impression that his mind is racing and his thoughts are jumping from one thing to another.

79 The ST audience will see the poignancy of this comment immediately, whereas I feel it is necessary to make Gasparin appear greedier, or more

corrupt in some way in the TT. The final phrase 'but there's plenty more...' is an addition on my part, but I feel it goes some way to explaining the pointed comment being made by Collé. It makes Gasparin appear boastful about his wealth, but blasé about how he manages to get all his money. His lack of subtlety is then higlighted even more by the comte's humility in the following speech.

80 It is obvious that the comte is being sarcastic with his ingratiating reply; this phrase sounds conventional, but the added stage direction will make sure that the director and actor are clear about the tone with which it is to be said. 'A thousand thanks' conjured up the image of an Arab sheikh in a British pantomine, which lost the gentle irony which lies behind the comte's words.

81 Up until this point, the comte had addressed Gasparin as 'vous', now it has changed to 'tu'. This may simply be because the comte knows he has got his own way and does not have to be overly polite. However, I think it is more a sign of how the comte changes his tone; their conversation becomes more laddish, as they discuss the possibility of the comte having the woman for nothing.

82 The description 'the likes of her' picks up on Gasparin's previous comment; it is as though the comte has dropped down to Gasparin's level of thinking and means of expression. It is also a further indication of the comte's sudden switch to 'tu' – he wants to give Gasparin the impression that they are of similar minds. Given Gasparin's ambiguous social status (it is worth noting that he still addresses the comte as 'vous'), this would probably flatter him, although the TT audience will hopefully still see that the comte is playing Gasparin for a fool.

83 I added the stage direction as a means of showing Gasparin's enthusiasm, and his lack of constraint in comparison with the comte. This is

evident from Gasparin's double exclamation of surprise in the ST – I think it is still important to have Gasparin sounding eager and unrestrained, but the visual image reinforces the language differences also. The comte would never cry out in such a way; everything he does and says is much more controlled.

84 I decided to have Gasparin swearing at this point as it is in such contrast to the comte's gentle reminder about the two young lovers. This is one point in the play where I feel I can emphasize the juxtaposition of debauchery and love. Gasparin's image of the chevalier's love for Sophie is crude, in that money is the first concern, followed by Sophie's temperament. Although money is important in this society, the chevalier would not see this as his main interest in marrying Sophie. Gasparin's swearing is in complete contrast to the comte's comment about putting the youngsters out of their misery; the comte's language is almost as flowery as that of the chevalier in scene 2.

The swearing is also a sign of Gasparin's impatience, as he is in a hurry to set up the meeting with his latest mistress.

85 The notion of 'sentiment' is one which is associated with the attitudes of those characters typical of the genre larmoyant: it is possible here that Collé is gently mocking the aforementioned genre.

86 I wanted to keep the image of Mme Gasparin's being two-faced, but I could not find a suitable equivalent in English using the words 'first' and 'last'. Again, this is not a literal translation, but it does keep the opposing aspects of Mme Gasparin's character, using the same imagery of tenderness and deception.

87 'Le bon Gasparin' is not the equivalent of 'good old Gasparin' – one associates this expression in English with someone who has managed to meet up to another's expectations in a positive sense, for example. The force of the

ST expression, however, lies in the comte's sarcasm. Gasparin has met the comte's expectations in that he is as gullible as he imagined him to be.

88 There is no avoidance of translation loss here; the TT audience has nothing with which to compare Collé's portrayal of the tax farmer. The ST audience would have been reminded at this point of financiers in literature such as that of Lesage's Turcaret, and they also would have been more aware of the changing image and social status of the financier in their society. However, the comte's further explanation of what he means by a tax farmer of the old school means that my TT audience is at least going to understand what the comte means by this term, so the comment will not lead to confusion.

89 As the play is set in the eighteenth century, it had to be 'the jingling of coins' rather than the 'rustle of banknotes'. The addition of 'in their fat purses' is a form of compensation; as the bad reputation of tax farmers must have been more readily understood by the ST audience, I am trying to give a further indication to the TT audience of the image of corruption and greed which the ST audience would have associated with the financiers of the 'old school'.

90 'Delicious' has similar connotations to the word 'delectable', as noted in point 56.

91 The comte again changes tack as he meets another character; this is now the language of courtship. This first short sentence sets the tone of their conversation. To keep this speech as one long sentence in the TT made the sentence sound very clumsy, when in fact the comte is extremely articulate

92 I added the extra 'you' at the end as I felt it was at this point that Mme Gasparin would interrupt. The fact that she has asked for the money would be the most embarrassing factor in the whole situation – if anyone else were to find out.

93 As this is the language of galanterie it seems more fitting to have Mme Gasparin address the comte as monsieur throughout. A British audience tends to associate French as being the language of love and seduction; the little reminders that the scene is taking place in France will strengthen the association.

94 Once again, this refects the elevated language of the ST. The hints of archaism are more prominent in this scene, as the comte and Mme Gasparin are being extremely polite to one another on the surface and their words are chosen very carefully.

95 This is another moment where I have chosen to add stage directions in order to reflect the suggestiveness of the ST language. It should be obvious from the ST language that there is a gradual build-up of tension between the two characters; they are obviously attracted to one another and this becomes more obvious as the scene continues. Mme Gasparin feigns embarrassment, and is very careful not to admit her attraction towards the comte in so many words. The fan acts as a useful prop as the TT audience will be able to use it as a guide to Mme Gasparin's character. The fan is a mask, it can cover her face when she is lying. As the comte's words and caresses arouse her, her agitation is reflected by her trying to cool her face by fanning herself. When she lets go of all her inhibitions and is about to surrender herself to the comte the fan will drop to the floor (the final stage direction in this scene). The use of a prop such as a fan is a means of compensating for the fact that my TT audience will not necessarily recognize the heightening tension in the scene fron the language alone; the same can be said for the other stage directions I have added, where the comte moves closer to Mme Gasparin, she backs off etc. This is the type of movement which Collé's actors may have adopted automatically, whereas a few indications to the TT actors will give more specific directions as to how the scene should be played.

96 The fact that he comte has mentioned passion would have been considered extremely forward and yet the language is still elevated and poetic. I have tried to allow for the comte's candour by having him move closer to Mme Gasparin as he speaks. This also fits in with the imagery of warmth – the closer he gets, the more her passions are aroused.

97 Rather than running the risk of the TT sounding like calque, I opted for a free translation, but one which reflects the comte's flattering tone.

98 This seemed like a prepared speech by Mme Gasparin – it is very likely that she prepared what she was going to say to the comte in order to keep up the appearance of being in financial distress. I wanted to give the TT the same quality of a prepared speech: well-balanced sentence structures, grammatical correctness.

99 As mentioned in my strategic decisions, this is one of the scenes where physicality will express anything which the language may not. If I were to leave out this stage direction, the suggestiveness of what the comte actually says may not be obvious if the actor does not indicate in some way that he is being slightly lecherous. The dramatic irony of the comte's words must be exploited to the full; to have his real intentions revealed in his actions while he is still maintaining an air of politeness is exactly the force behind the ST.

100 The 'je raffole de vous' is familiar language; I did not want to upset the balance of the rest of the scene, however, by using an expression which was too coarse. Instead, I incorporated the suggestiveness of the comte's spech into the idea of his being willing to do anything for Mme Gasparin, i.e. he is even prepared to pay for the privilege of sleeping with her.

101 Mme Gasparin knows exactly what the comte is getting at, but still keeps up the pretence of high moral standards. I have made slightly more explicit what the ST audience would have understood automatically from the language adopted by the two characters.

102 This is the tone of language which would be more expected from the chevalier; it needs to be over-the-top as the comte is simply trying to provoke Mme Gasparin into admitting that she is attracted to him. This is a form of parody by Collé; the language of galanterie has become a sham in this scene, and perhaps Collé is suggesting that this is in fact the case. However, this does not change the humour of the scene, which depends on dramatic irony. The audience knows that the comte is exaggerating, and that he is manipulating Mme Gasparin by what he says.

103 I decided on 'decorum' as I interpreted 'délicatesse' in the sense of tact, rather than delicacy of manners (both definitions are given in Robert). The word 'decorum' works well here, as the comte picks up on what Mme Gasparin says in his following speech.

104 The excessive use of 'que' in the ST sentence makes it sound complicated and wordy; it is as though the comte is trying to dazzle Mme Gasparin with his longwinded sentence. In order to reflect the complex structure of the ST sentence, I decided on the accumulation of phrases involving the word 'think'. This is another point of humour in the play, as the comte is by now very sure of his victory and, as Mme Gasparin admits, seems capable of convincing her of anything.

105 During a performance at a small private theatre in the eighteenth century, the exchange of knowing looks between actor and audience would have probably happened automatically, given that the people concerned would have known one another. In a public performance, however, the atmosphere is completely different, and I feel there is a need – up to a certain extent – to indicate moments of dramatic irony. The actor may have looked at the audience at this point anyway, but this stage direction also acts as a guide to the comte's tone of voice as he claims the whole matter is not costing him anything.

106 This is another echo of the title, coming at the very point of the comte's seduction of Mme Gasparin.

107 The word 'reconnaissance' is taken up again by Mme Gasparin in the following scene, and so I wanted a word which could be used in both the examples. Although the term 'recognition' could have been an apt translation, it did not fit quite so neatly as a translation of 'reconnaissance' in Scene 7. I also wanted to keep the sense of opposition between the use of the verb 'exciter' and the more banal 'reconnaissance' in this last sentence. I felt this opposition could be highlighted by Mme Gasparin's hesitation over her choice of words; the audience (and the comte) might have expected her to use a more passionate term at this point. The fact that she does not adds even more to the increasing sense of passion between them.

108 The 'je vous aime à la fureur' is again extremely passionate; this is not a pleasantry, it is a very direct admission of his sexual attraction towards a married woman. I felt the use of two adverbs rather than one at least went some way to indicating his rush of enthusiasm.

109 My version of the corresponding phrases in the ST has the comte sounding more dynamic; the question and imperative form seemed more forceful. This is the key speech in the come's seduction of Mme Gasparin, and I felt it had to stand out as such.

110 Although it is Mme Gasparin who repeats the word 'reconnaissance' in the following speech (in a different context), I was not altogether sure that the audience would notice the play on words. As the word 'gratitude' fitted so well here, I decided to include it so that the coded messages between the two characters would be more obvious.

111 Although this is much longer than the ST sentence, I felt again it was necessary to make the innuendos quite clear. One could assume that Collé's audience would have been expecting the sexual undertones in the play, but

my audience does not know Collé's work and so at some points in the play there is a need to make more explicit what the ST audience would possibly have expected.

112 This is a further example of the hidden meanings behind their words: only the comte, Mme Gasparin and the audience are aware of the true situation.

113 The comte's final comment also has to be loaded, yet subtle enough so that the chevalier and Sophie remain in the dark. The beauty of Collé's text lies in what remains unsaid, rather than what is said.

114 This scene proved to be the most difficult to translate. Although there are very few stage directions in the ST, I felt this scene allowed for a certain amount of interpretation on the part of the actors, and myself as the translator of the text. This assumption is based on my knowledge of Collé as an author, and an idea which I have formed of his work and the type of audience he was aiming at. Sophie shows herself to be an emancipated woman in this scene, in terms of how she admits she is willing to give herself to her lover. As the target audience will not realize how candid Sophie's admission is for a girl of her upbringing in this century, I have opted to compensate for this in the form of stage directions. My intention is not to turn this scene into farce, letting the physicality overshadow what is being said. This is something which I regretted about the performance of Le Galant escroc which I saw in Paris: the director had chosen to have the actors starting to undress one another on stage, adding to Gasparin's sense of shock when he arrives on the scene. I feel this is taking things too far; the language of the scene does not lack subtlety, and the chevalier in particular is rather naive about matters of love.

115 This opening phrase reveals Sophie's longing to be alone with the chevalier, as well as her eagerness to find out what the comte intends to do.

This sets the tone for the whole scene, whereas something like 'you didn't have time to tell me' simply suggests that a previous conversation was interrupted, or the chevalier was busy elsewhere.

116 By placing the 'dearest Sophie' at the beginning of the sentence, it draws attention to the way in which the chevalier idolizes Sophie; terms of endearment occur frequently in his speeches. The inclusion of 'oh Sophie' one line later is a similar indication of the chevalier's emotional language.

117 I wanted to find an equivalent register to 'assurer votre sort'; the expression 'seal your fate' made it sound as though Sophie were about to be punished. The expression 'no one can tear my heart apart' is a cliché of sorts, but it does not make the chevalier appear ridiculously exaggerated which, as mentioned in my strategic decisions, is not my intention.

118 Although the beginning of this speech and the two previous speeches does not retain the actual word 'interest' as a direct translation of 'intérêt', the exchanges reflect the differing tones of the two characters; Sophie is fairly adamant, whereas the chevalier is more concerned with expressing his undying love. This is the main force of the ST, and it is preferable to have speeches which retain the neatness and conciseness of the original, rather than trying, unsuccessfully, to find a suitable expression about the characters' having one another's best interests at heart.

119 I decided to reduce this part of the speech to one sentence, as otherwise the speech was rambling, which is not typical of the character of Sophie.

120 I wanted to make it qite clear that the chevalier was beginning to doubt that Sophie wanted to marry him after all. The two unfinished sentences here made his train of thought clearer than a single sentence would have done.

121 See Point 115.

122 This is a similar point to 116; this clichéd expression sounds more natural than direct calque of the ST.

123 This is the point where I am suggesting that Sophie begins to hint that she and the chevalier should sleep with one another. The TT has a suggestive meaning, without Sophie appearing blatant. The accompanying stage direction is an indication to the actress of how the words should be said, and the chevalier's reaction is a further means of showing the difference in confidence between the two characters.

124 The ST has the echo of 'époux' and 'épouserai', as Sophie is simply confirming what the chevalier has just said to her. This is the reason for repeating the word 'husband' in the TT.

125 As this is such a mutual exchange of compliments, I liked the idea of the two characters picking up on one another's words and sometimes using the same images. The chevalier also tends to take the image one step further, as he does in the following speech. I felt the text read better without the inclusion of the phrase 'could Sophie bear to live without you', as it allowed for the continuation of the idea of their being able to read one another's minds.

126 This is an example of the chevalier's slightly more exaggerated version of Sophie's declaration.

127 The chevalier always talks about the soul, whereas Sophie does not always use such abstract notions. The reason I chose to have this particular image is because of the way in which it can be distorted in the following speeches to reveal Sophie's obvious intentions to seduce the chevalier.

128 This speech is designed to show the great difference in attitude between the chevalier and Sophie. The chevalier is preaching again, just as he did in Scene 2. However, it is important that he does not sound angry with Sophie; he is more concerned about preserving her reputation.

129 Sophie suddenly addresses him as tu at this point; the stage direction shows the sudden change in tempo as Sophie reveals her passion.

130 Similar imagery is used in Scene 6 when the comte and Mme Gasparin first meet. This makes a link between the two seduction scenes, although the chevalier's reaction highlights the difference in maturity and experience between the two couples.

131 I did not want the sudience to miss the most important part of Sophie's speech through being distracted by the physical movement. To have Sophie look up at this point suggests that she is saying something quite important.

132 Although this is a slight deviation from the ST, I did not want to lose the natural flow of speech by sticking too rigidly to the ST if this meant that the words sounded stilted.

133 As the chevalier is obviously quite excited, I did not want to have his speech sounding too wordy, as he is obviously not in control of his feelings. My main intention in this speech is to reflect the sexual connotations which are present in words such as 'plaisir' and 'volupté'.

134 My main concern here was to have Gasparin shattering the romantic moment; the fact that he pulls the chevalier to his feet not only makes Gasparin seem oafish, it also points to the fact that the two young lovers should not be seen as totally innocent.

135 The irony of Gasparin's comment about his wife got lost when I kept to the word order of the French, whereas here the audience has time to laugh at and absorb the humour.

136 The phrase 'my wife's otherwise occupied' makes it sound as though she is up to no good, even though this is not what Gasparin is thinking. This is the connotation of the ST also, the point being that the audience notes the irony behind Gasparin's words.

Also 'it was me' rather than 'it was I', as I think this is a gentle reminder of the small differences in language register between Gasparin and, for example, the comte and chevalier.

137 The chevalier has a totally different means of expression to Gasparin; he tends towards exaggeration and hyperbole, whereas Gasparin is much more blunt. It is difficult to judge just how literary the chevalier's language would have sounded to the ST audience, although the comte's comment about the chevalier sounding like something from a novel suggests that his language would have appeared flowery and romanticized to the ST audience. The audience is brought back to reality in this scene; it is important to maintain the distinction between Gasparin's down-to-earth approach, and the chevalier's more idealized view of his situation. This distinction is made possible through their different use of language.

138 This seemed a perfect opportunity to show the distinction between their choice of vocabulary and expressions, as mentioned in the previous point.

139 Again I opted for expressions which could have double interpretations; the chevalier and Sophie have to sound perfectly innocent, and yet the audience sees their comments in a different way. This will also be the case in the next scene, where the comte's comments have to be subtle enough not to give the game away to Gasparin, and yet cleverly worded so that Mme Gasparin feels uncomfortable.

140 Although I could have translated this as 'just got back', the notion of even slight innuendo was too good an opportunity to miss. Depending on how this is said by the actor, this comment will make the audience smile or even laugh. As it is quite difficult to replicate the wit and innuendo of the ST, this could perhaps be seen as compensation. It fits in with the context as Mme Gasparin is anxious in case her husband suspects anything.

141 As 'affaire' could apply to both affairs of the heart and business deals I wanted to have an expression which also reflected this duality. I first thought of 'business affair', but 'transaction' seemed better as it suggests the exchange

of goods – as the woman concerned was selling her body the term was certainly suitable.

142 The comte is a well-educated man and his language would always be grammatically correct. Although nowadays it is more common for people to say 'like me', the 'such as I' also reflects the dated language.

143 My policy in translating the comte's loaded comments was to try to keep to the original as much as possible but if a fairly literal translation proved stilted and decidedly unfunny, I felt it was best to deviate slightly from the ST expressions where necessary. The scene works because of these loaded comments, and if they do not appear as natural elements in the conversation then the translation has failed. Timing and playability were my first concern in translating this scene as so much depended on the comte's cleverly worded comments.

144 I could have used 'happy' or 'content', but the comte's answer would not have been so piquant.

145 The physical action is a reflection of the 'tutoiement' once again. Visually this stage direction adds to the humour also, as Gasparin will look extremely pleased as he is being let into the comte's secret and Mme Gasparin will be panicking as she will be wondering just how much the comte is going to say.

146 My version is longer, but Gasparin insults his wife so much in this scene, and the two men talk in such a laddish manner that I felt the choice of expression had to reflect this fully. The notion of equivalence is called into question; what would have been deemed improper in the eighteenth century may seem quite mild to a contemporary audience. Although I did not want to overdo the insulting tone, idiomatic expressions such as 'she's no oil painting' rather than a more banal 'she's not pretty' add a touch of realism in that the language is the expression of that particular personality.

147 The body language in this scene, as in all of the scenes, in fact, is of the utmost importance. This particular stage direction ensures that the pressure is placed on Mme Gasparin right from the beginning, while Gasparin is blissfully unaware of what has taken place.

148 Long lists such as this are not so common in English dialogue; it works much better in French. Consequently, I decided to add a bit more to the TT

149 For Mme Gsparin to react so violently to the comte's description I felt he had to be more pertinent; what would have seemed quite personal in the eighteenth century seems somewhat bland when translated literally into English. As the comte is staring at Mme Gasparin at this point, I thought of having his description of her features follow his gaze and the fact that she stops him at this point seems perfectly natural.

150 Gasparin is so abrupt that I felt the TT needed more to show his total disregard for her feelings. To call her 'woman' is dismissive and condescending.

151 By returning to the comte's final remark I got to focus on the neck, rather than her hands. This particular comment worked well, as it has connotations of 'you've got a neck on you' which certainly applies to Mme Gasparin.

152 There is translation loss here, as this does not have the resonance of the 'tendre' which appears in Scene 1. The comte is obviously talking about how he rates the woman as a lover, and so 'considerate' is perhaps more appropriate than 'affectionate'. There is also a more lecherous note to 'when the moment arises' than 'when she has to be'.

153 Mme Gasparin has to appear both defiant and frightened, as she is worried that her husband might realize that she is actually the woman in question.

154 As Gasparin is revealing the intimate details of his wife's performance in bed and the comte appears to be doing the same, it is almost as though they have formed a club together and Mme Gasparin cannot join. The fact that Gasparin picks up on the comte's choice of words makes the reference to sex obvious, and also emphasizes this type of bond between the two men. I have also embellished the ST with tonal markers which I feel would be characteristic of Gasparin, such as the 'mind'. Such markers are not missing in the ST; the 'oh'! for example at the beginning of the sentence is a tonal marker, but to translate it as 'oh!' at the beginning of the TT sentence looks like calque.

155 Again the TT sentence is a lot longer in translation, but the most important consideraton is the irony of what Gasparin is saying. The actor would have to pause at this point as it should provoke laughter amongst the audience.

156 I felt it necessary to change the word order in English, as the emphasis would fall more naturally here on the 'you' and the 'in love'.

157 This image is similar to the comte's questioning of Mme Gasparin in Scene 6, when he mentions the 'flames of passion'. As this speech does have the same tone and similar vocabulary to the comte's build-up to seducing Mme Gasparin in the first place, similar imagery at least reminds the audience (as well as Mme Gasparin) that the comte is capable of turning on the charm whenever he has to. Mme Gasparin also realizes by now that she has been duped, and the reminders of their previous discussion will make her even more nervous.

158 This is one point where I could not find a suitable expression in English with the word 'noble', which although used in a different context here may still have resonances of their social positions.

159 This term of endearment is like rubbing salt into Mme Gasparin's wounds, and it is also an echo of how the comte kept addressing Gasparin as

'my dear Gasparin' when he tried to get the money from him in the first place. The word 'lady' is also ironic, as this is the term the comte and Gasparin argued about at the beginning of Scene 4.

160 The term 'scoundrel' is an apt description of the comte, and has the connotations which I mentioned in point 1 when discussing the title of he play.

161 The comte even goes so far as to tell Gasparin where the money is exactly; I added the detail of the cabinet being beside her bed as it suggests to the audience that Mme Gasparin did put the money away there before sleeping with the comte – he will be reminding her of this also, which is close to a veiled threat if she refuses to give her husband back the money.

162 To have a translation such as 'cruelly deceived' makes her sound like the chevalier, whereas Mme Gasparin knows that her plan simply has not worked. Granted, he has taken adavantage of her, but she is not the wronged woman by any means, as the comte reminds her in Scene 13.

163 Again the tone shows that Mme Gasparin is not pathetic; she knows when she has been beaten and is bitter rather than hurt.

164 The audience will see the comte's touch of sarcasm in the 'ta chère femme'; although the TT version of 'your charming wife' will also make the audience smile, the extra comment about this being the opportune moment is a bonus. After the innuendos and the heightened drama of the previous scene, I did not want the play to lose its momentum at this point by having the comte sound a touch off-hand.

165 A literal translation of 'remplie de justice' and 'esprit de justice' made the translation sound stilted, and as the comte uses both expressions a short time after one another I felt the speeches would have been marked by their awkwardness. As the comte is still addressing Gasparin as 'tu' I felt I could use a more idiomatic phrase which is a bit closer to the tone of the previous

scene. The comte seems to call Gasparin 'tu' when there is any hint of impropriety in what they are saying to one another.

166 This idiomatic phrase renders the exact tone of the original; the comte is careful of what he is saying as he is wondering whether Gasparin is foolish enough to believe what he is saying.

167 Rather than something similar to 'that's some story' I thought this would maintain the dramatic irony: the audience knows that this is exactly what the comte is doing

168 I wanted to maintain the echo of the word 'reconnaissance', particularly as this was the euphemism first adopted by Mme Gasparin. The tables have now been turned, and it is fitting that her own words should be used against her.

169 There is a combination in the ST of a conventional polite means of extending a compliment to a woman and the baseness of the vocabulary used, which is why I wanted to keep the sense of the 'que vous avez eue'. This could have been a conventional compliment right up to the last comment Gasparin makes, so the emphasis in my TT falls at the end.

170 Again a conventional answer; it makes both men sound very blasé about the whole business which is the tone of the ST.

171 By not specifically mentioning the fact that she deserves to get the money from her husband in the second half of her husband, this leaves the phrase more ambiguous. She deserves the money as she hands it back with such good grace and she has earned it in the sense that the comte has got what he wanted.

172 The comte's arguments are ridiculous in that the chevalier's good fortune depends on war breaking out. Mme Gasparin knows that this is ridiculous, and is well aware of the veiled threat behind the comment about how the chevalier is related to the comte. This is blackmail, but Gasparin is

naive enough to believe that the comte's arguments about war breaking out are perfectly legitimate.

173 The responses made by Gasparin and Mme Gasparin are important, in that they reveal their opinions of the comte. Gasparin is completely duped, but her reply is extremely abrupt. It is the tone which I felt was more important, rather than trying to find a phrase with 'reasons' which did not quite have the force of Mme Gasparin's curt response.

174 Gasparin's lack of eloquence in the ST is important, as the last impression he gives before leaving the more intelligent comte and Mme Gasparin is that of a bumbling idiot. The hesitations show his naive eagerness and his inability to articulate his thoughts.

175 The register has changed once again, as the comte seems on the surface to show more respect. This is the politeness of convention which will irritate Mme Gasparin even more as the comte's polite question is nothing short of blackmail.

176 The structure of the ST sentence is complex, the effect being that Mme Gasparin sounds pompous and indignant. However, when I tried to retain the complexity of sentence structure I felt there was a danger that the TT audience would get a bit lost, which detracts from the indignant tone. The use of the verb 'to despise' rather than, for example 'to hate' or 'I can't stand you' does have a more indignant tone.

177 The word 'hate' is more clipped here; she has let her guard drop as she is getting more and more angry with the comte's patronizing tone.

178 I chose the sentence breaks where I thought they were most natural, rather than rigidly following the sentence structure of the ST.

179 As I could not find a satisfactory concise way of mirroring the sequence of verbs in English, I decided to opt for clarity instead. The comte is

self-assured and very precise; to have an awkward jumble of verbs in English loses the tone of the ST.

180 This is quite strong for Mme Gasparin, but it shows her two sides; she can be indignant and act like a lady wronged in front of the comte, but she is just as calculating as he is. The contrast between her previous pomposity and her sudden swearing is quite striking.

181 The addition of 'little' makes it sound even more secretive and just a touch condescending

182 This is compensation for the repetition of 'penser' in the ST; this is not a literal translation but the same effect is achieved in that Mme Gasparin picks up on what the comte is saying and interrupts him before he can carry his veiled threats even further. This sentence is shorter in the TT, but it reflects her anger and so is not too much of a translation loss. As the text has been lengthened on the whole, such omissions help to redress the balance, if they do not change the overall effect.

183 This is an extremely long sentence in the ST and I felt it needed to be broken up simply for the actress to be able to catch her breath. The colon before the final phrase makes Mme Gasparin's pause and this reflects how emphatic her conclusion is.

184 The comte is very self-assured and flatters himself at this point – his confidence is not really arrogant, however, which is why I chose such an idiomatic, lighthearted way of singing his own praises. It is important that the audience remains on his side rather than seeing him as the villain in this case.

185 I did not think it appropriate to have her swearing at this point, as the original stage direction of 'se radoucissant' suggests that she has admitted defeat. The term 'beastly man' is slightly dated which is appropriate for the suggestion of archaism, and it is also fairly mild compared with her former outbursts.

186 This is the one point in the scene where the comte is not putting on an act and his language should consequently sound matter-of-fact.

187 The register is typical of a recognition scene such as in Diderot's *Le Fils naturel*. As mentioned before, Collé questioned the vraisemblance of such scenes, so it is likely that we are to assume that this is gentle mockery of contrived endings. I decided to repeat the 'Oh, Madame' as it sounds a little ridiculous, especially considering what has just taken place in the scene before.

188 The comte is masterful here; he is the only character not to say 'Oh, Madame'.

189 Again I wanted to have the contrast between the poetic, flowery language and Mme Gasparin's true personality, which is why I chose to have her swearing here also. This is an example of maintaining the combination of vulgarity and idealism which I discussed in my strategic decisions.

190 Once again the comte adapts his language to suit the situation; this is something which could just as easily have been said by the chevalier. It is important to reflect the flowery language of the ST as it makes the comte seem even more calculating – Mme Gasparin can do nothing but smile sweetly.

191 The repetition of the 'Oh Madame, how can...' in theses two sentences mirrors the 'Ah, madame/ma tante que de..' of the ST. Again it emphasizes the more idealistic manner of speaking of the chevalier and Sophie and classes them together as such.The language of the scene is not in keeping with the reality of the situation; although the audience, the comte and Mme Gasparin are all aware of this, the other characters are not.

192 I did not want to have Gasparin sounding blunt, because of the stage direction suggesting that he is good-hearted. However, he does stop them before they get too carried away – this is perhaps Collé's way of telling his

audience that he has had enough of all the hyperbole. The tone I wanted to convey in this comment was, therefore, one that indicated a gentle put-down.

193 This is closer to the laddish comments exchanged by the comte and Gasparin in Scene 10. Again the comments must be open to interpretation by the audience.

194 As mentioned in the previous point, my choice of expression has to be such that it leaves Gasparin's comments open to interpretation, just as in the ST. He could be talking either about his wife's agreeing to the marriage or agreeing to sleep with the comte.

195 This is not the literal translation, but it is something which will strike Mme Gasparin as being painfully true, which is the intended effect of the ST.

196 The double meaning here lies in the fact that she is confessing that she might have slept with the comte anyway, but is more angry because she has been duped over the money.

197 I did not want to make Sophie sound overly sentimental at this point as she is the more level-headed of the couple. There is hyperbole but her expression of gratitude is very calm and controlled, unlike the chevalier's natural exuberance.

198 A small reminder of the title as the play comes to an end.

199 I chose not to have him finish the sentence so that the audience would be aware of the ongoing reference to 'sentiment'. The ST audience would be more aware of the expression, whereas my audience is not necessarily going to notice the various references.

200 As mentioned in my translation strategy, I do not feel it is appropriate to retain the song, but an eighteenth-century British audience would be accustomed to an epilogue spoken by the characters at the end of a play. In order to retain the sense of fun of the vaudeville, I have opted for rhyme. A word-for-word translation proved to be nigh on impossible, but my aim is to

preserve what I see to be the attitudes of the various characters, and have them saying things which are in keeping with their personality.

201 This cliché summarizes the chevalier's attitude to love; although this is not the exact translation of the ST, I feel it is a clear marker of the chevalier's personality.

202 The audience may get confused by a reference to 'Iris', thinking that this is another woman known to the chevalier. Instead, I have opted for another clichéd expression; it may not have the same reference to antiquity, but it avoids any ambiguity and is in keeping with the chevalier's romanticized view of love.

203 I decided to keep the refrain, and repetition of the final line as I feel this is a quality of the vaudeville which makes it jaunty, and also acts as a link between what all of the characters are saying. Although they have different attitudes, they are all concerned with the one theme, i.e. the meaning of love.

204 The final line in Gasparin's verse in the ST is different from all the others. I think this is important for several reasons; it isolates Gasparin from the others in terms of his level of intelligence, i.e. he is not quite able to remember and repeat what the others say. It also makes Gasparin appear self-important, as he wants to tell everyone precisely what *he* thinks about love, as opposed to a general opinion.

205 As Mme Gasparin is talking directly to the comte in this verse, I felt I could get away with a reference to the comte's blackmailing tricks.

206 As mentioned above, my intention in writing the epilogue was to retain the identity of the characters. The final verse is designed to make the audience laugh, or smile. It leaves them with the impression that the play is not designed to make any deep social comments, but is, rather, a piece of entertainment. The comte is a rogue and a charmer; the vocabulary here sums up his whole attitude to love affairs.